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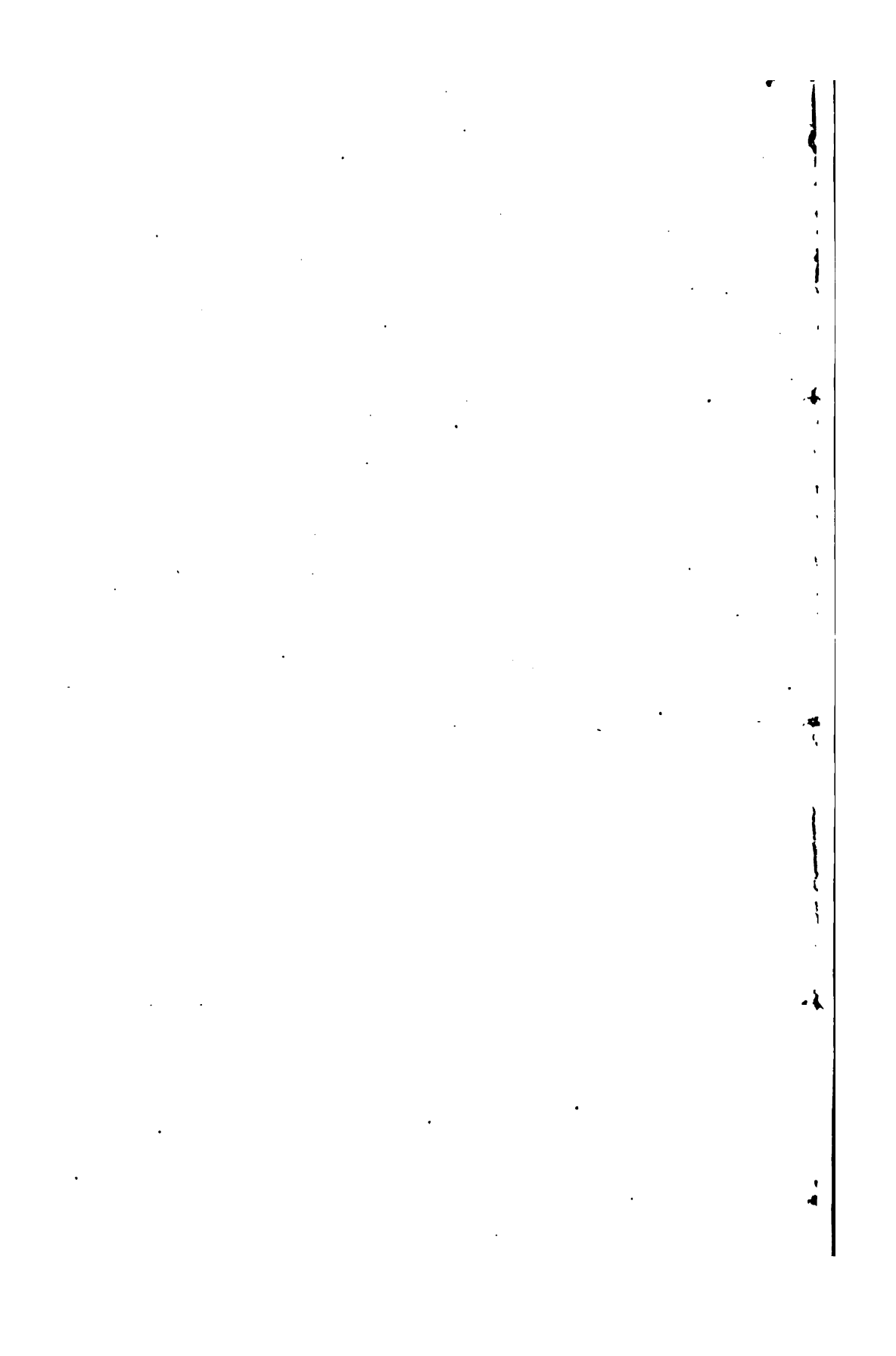


RECORDS
OF THE
ROUGH RIDERS

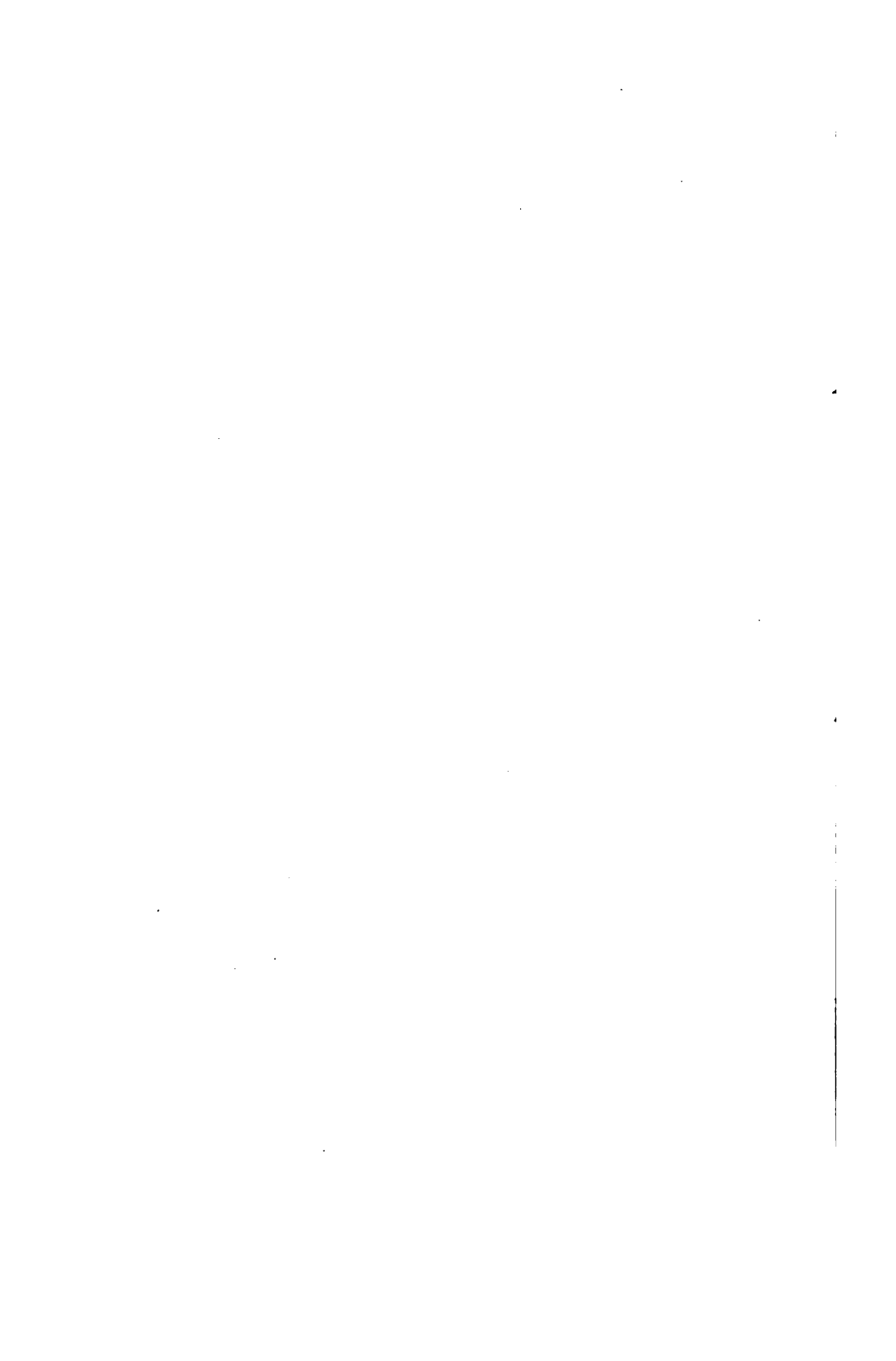
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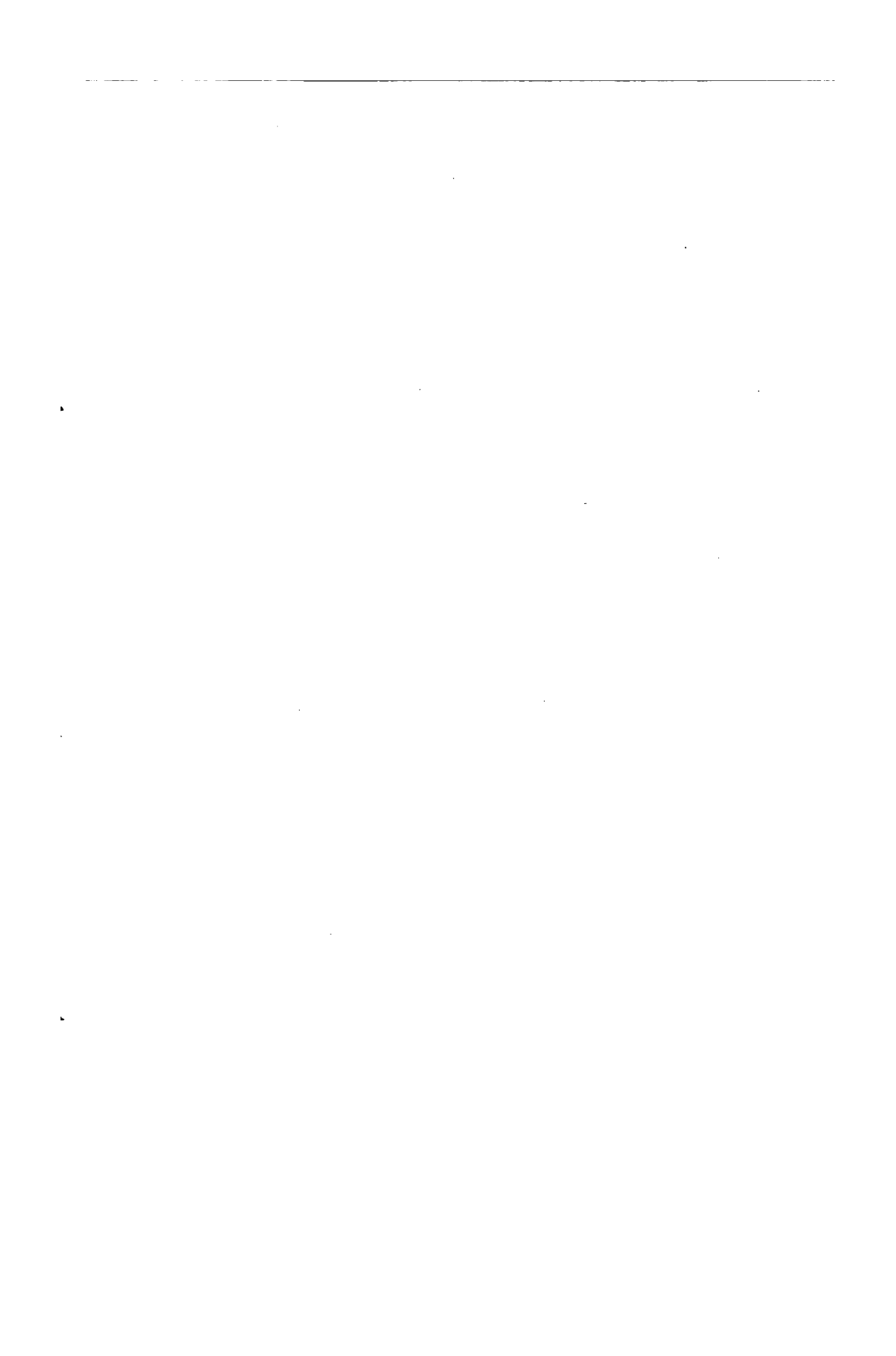






**RECORDS
OF THE ROUGH RIDERS.**







LIEUTENANT-COLONEL R. B. COLVIN, C.B.

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RECORDS OF THE ROUGH RIDERS

(XXth Battalion Imperial Yeomanry.)

BOER WAR, 1899—1902.

By
Captain H. G. McKenzie Rew.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BROWN & WILSON, BEDFORD.

1907.

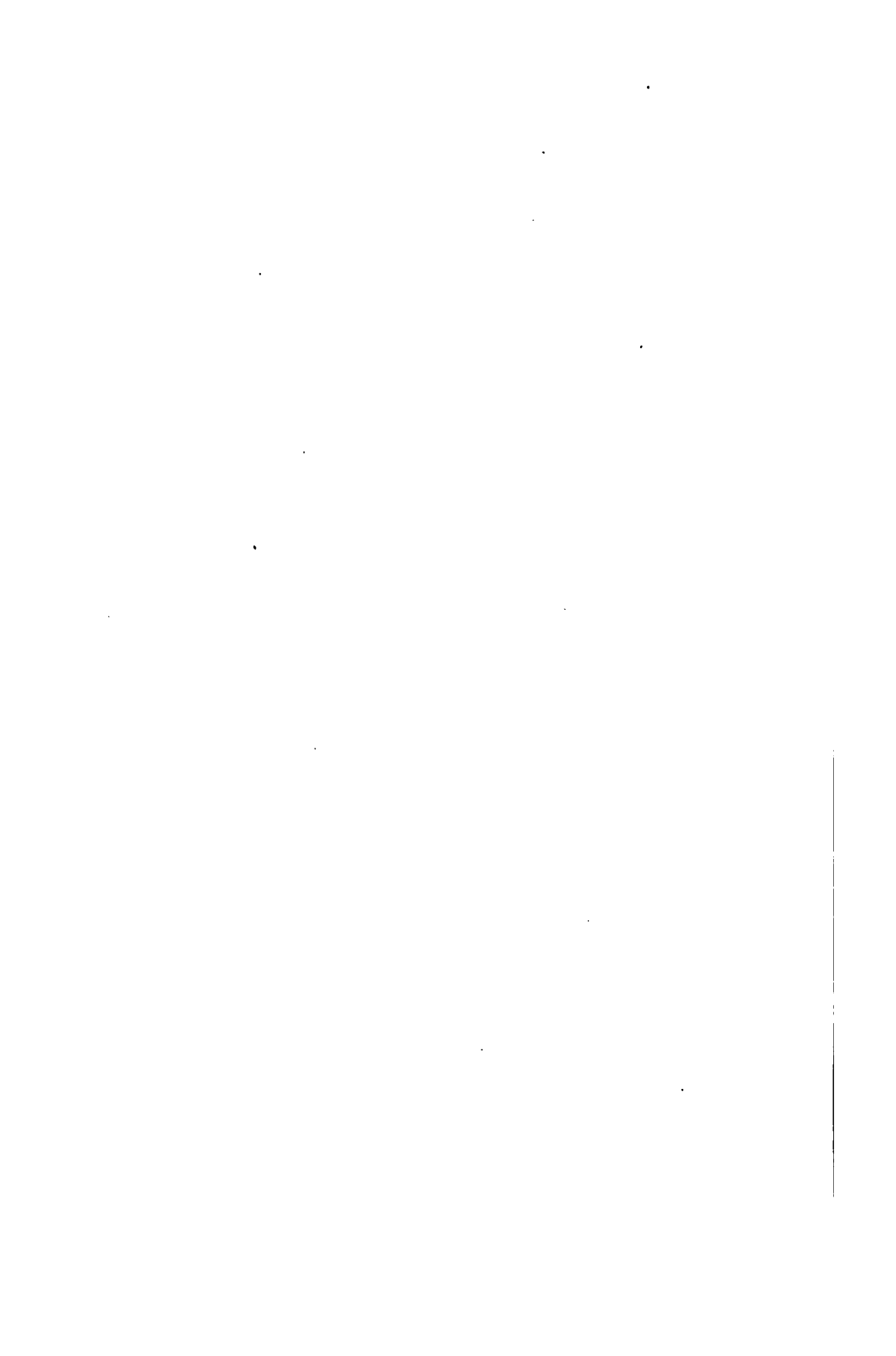
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Dedicated to
LT.-COLONEL R. B. COLVIN, C.B.,
AND THE OFFICERS,
NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN
OF THE "ROUGH RIDERS."



PREFACE.

This volume, which constitutes the Record of a Regiment, is merely a plain statement of facts: a story unpretentious and unembellished. For the compilation of this Record I am indebted to several officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, who kindly helped with diaries and notes, while for further information I have gleaned from the books already written. Even with all the material which I have had the opportunity of perusing and collating, it is possible that much good work has been left unchronicled, and that many notable individual deeds were accomplished, of which it has been impossible to give particulars, owing to the Regiment having been distributed over such a wide war area—due to the exigencies of active service—extending over a period of some sixteen months.

H. G. MCKENZIE REW.

Amptill, October, 1907.

PRO PATRIA.

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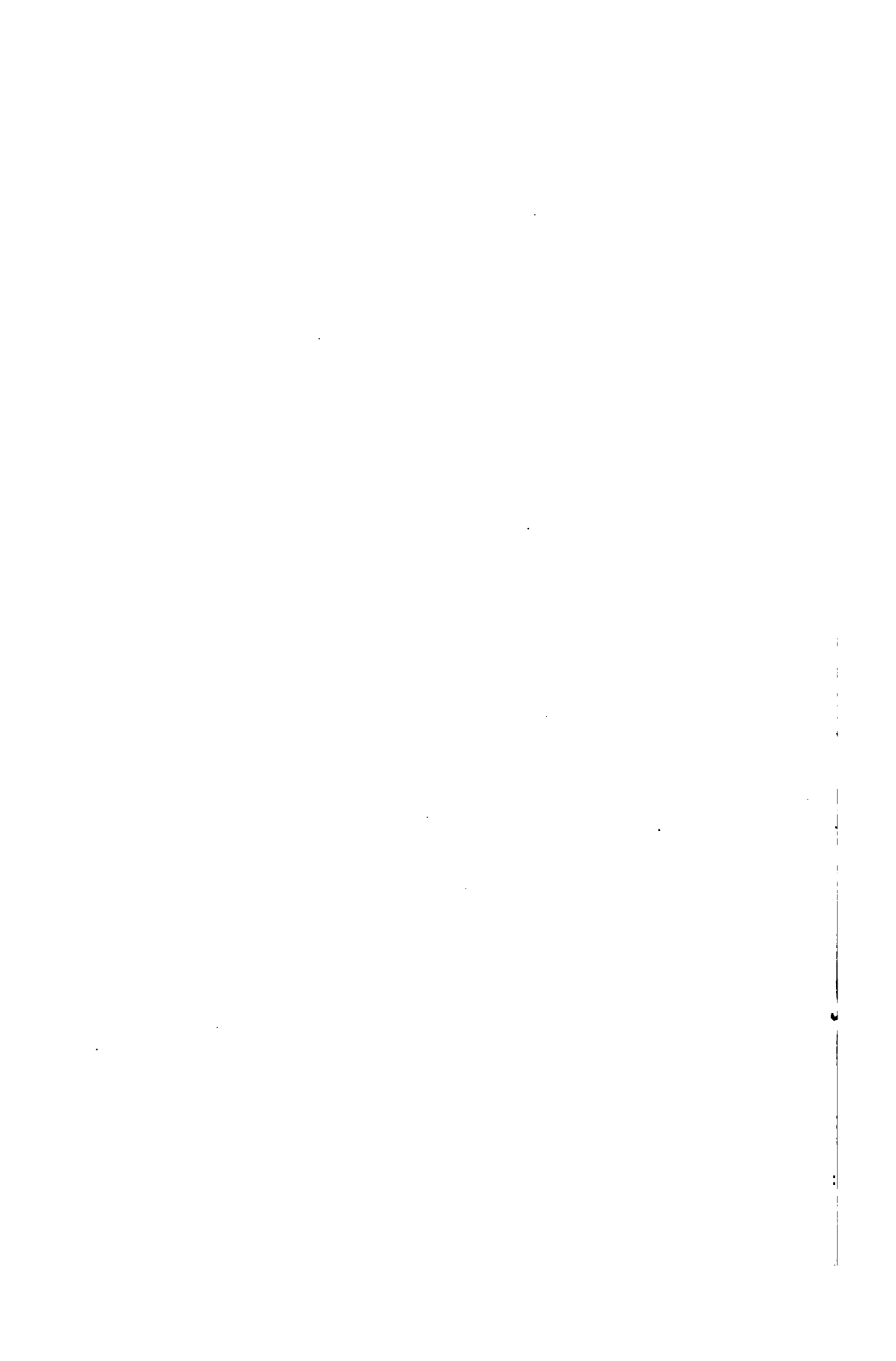
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INTRODUCTION
BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL COLVIN, C.B.

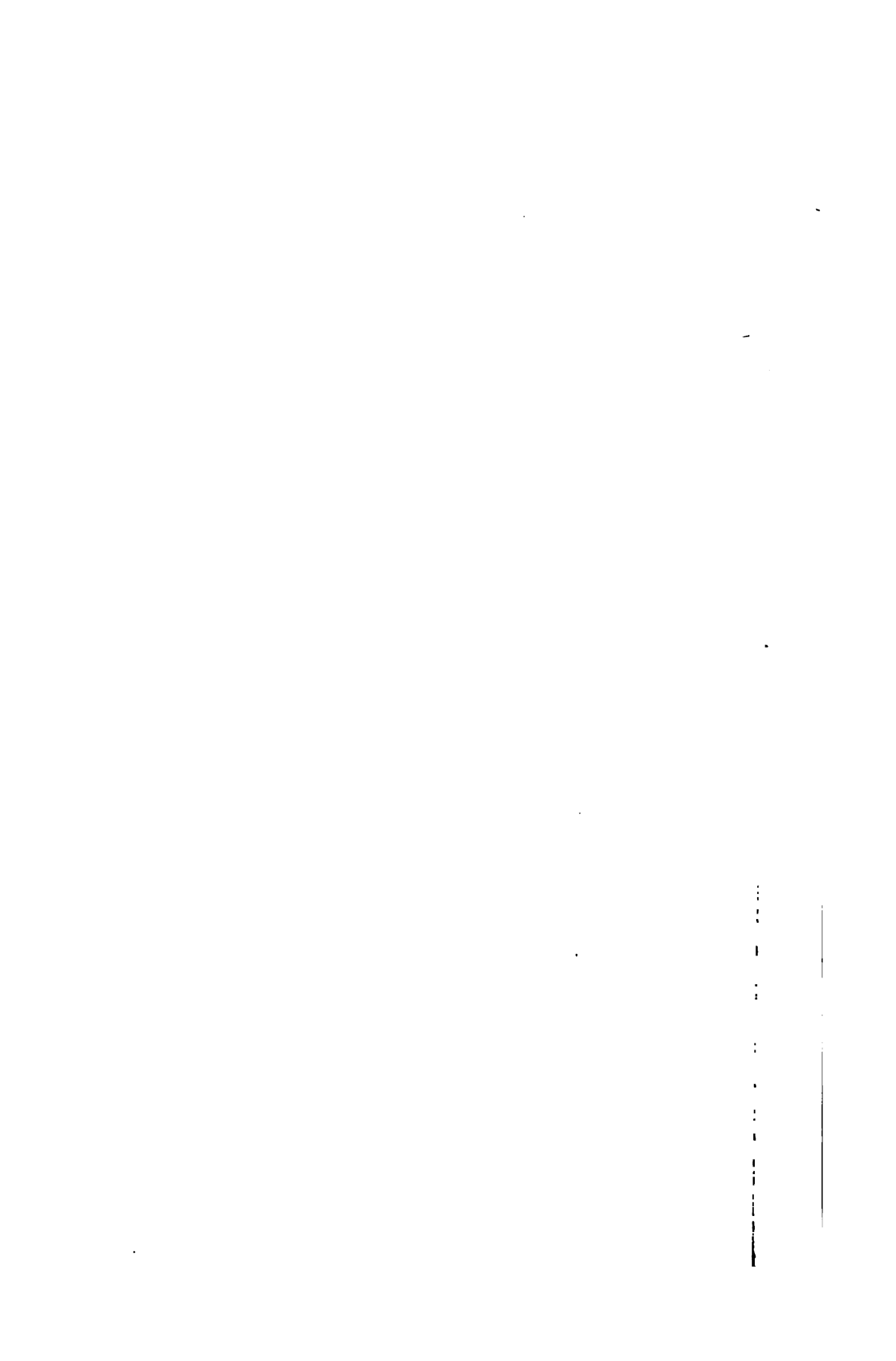
The records of the XXth Battalion I.Y., a regiment called into a short existence in the years 1900—1901, have been compiled by Captain McKenzie Rew, from his own and other officers' diaries. It is only natural and right that the doings of the Company in which the Author served should be brought into greater prominence than, perhaps, has been given to the other Companies of the Battalion, but the daily routine of work, the hardships and privations, the many difficulties, and the more trying periods of inaction experienced by one Company, have been experienced by all, and there is no need to repeat the tale; suffice it that this short history of the Rough Riders will revive memories already becoming dim; it will recall days which to many of us were the most eventful in our lives; bring back the faces of friends and comrades who have passed like "ships in the night," and also place on record the work done by a regiment which, without any pretensions to fame, can truly assert that it faithfully served its country.

R. B. COLVIN,
Late Lieutenant-Colonel Commanding
XXth Battalion I.Y.

Monkhams, October, 1907.







RECORDS OF THE ROUGH RIDERS.

(XXth Battalion Imperial Yeomanry.)

CHAPTER I.

THE BATTALION.

AFTER the early reverses which befell the British arms at the commencement of the Boer War, the urgent need of more mounted troops was felt, and an appeal made to the manhood of the Empire, which was freely responded to from all parts of His Majesty's Dominions.

The British Isles alone, in the space of a few weeks, raised, equipped, and despatched to the front, a force of over 10,000 horsemen.

This narrative will deal with the fortunes of one of the units which composed this force.

The 20th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry was the last raised for this contingent, and its members were enrolled at 68, Victoria Street, Westminster, early in March, 1900. The Committee which organised the

Battalion was composed of Major the Earl of Lathom (Lancashire Hussars), Major H. A. Barclay (Hants. Carabiniers), and Major Chadwick (Reserve of Officers).

The Battalion was officially designated "The Rough Riders," and was about 500 strong. It was divided into four companies, which were numbered by the Headquarters' Staff 72, 76, 78, and 79.

The following officers were appointed to it:—

BATTALION STAFF.

Commanding Officer: LIEUTENANT-COLONEL R. B. COLVIN (Loyal Suffolk Hussars).

Second in Command: MAJOR H. A. ANDERSON (late Capt. Royal Fusiliers).

Adjutant: CAPTAIN VISCOUNT F. C. MAITLAND (late Scots Greys).

Quarter Master: LIEUTENANT R. WYNNE (late Pembroke Yeomanry Cavalry).

Medical Officer: CAPTAIN T. WALCOT.

Veterinary Officer: LIEUTENANT D. C. BARNINGHAM.

Regimental Sergeant-Major: W. WEIGHTMAN (late 1st Royal Dragoons).

72ND COMPANY.

Captain: E. CHADWICK (Major, Reserve of Officers).

Lieutenant: The HON. L. A. MILLES (late 16th Lancers).

Lieutenant: C. J. FAUVEL.

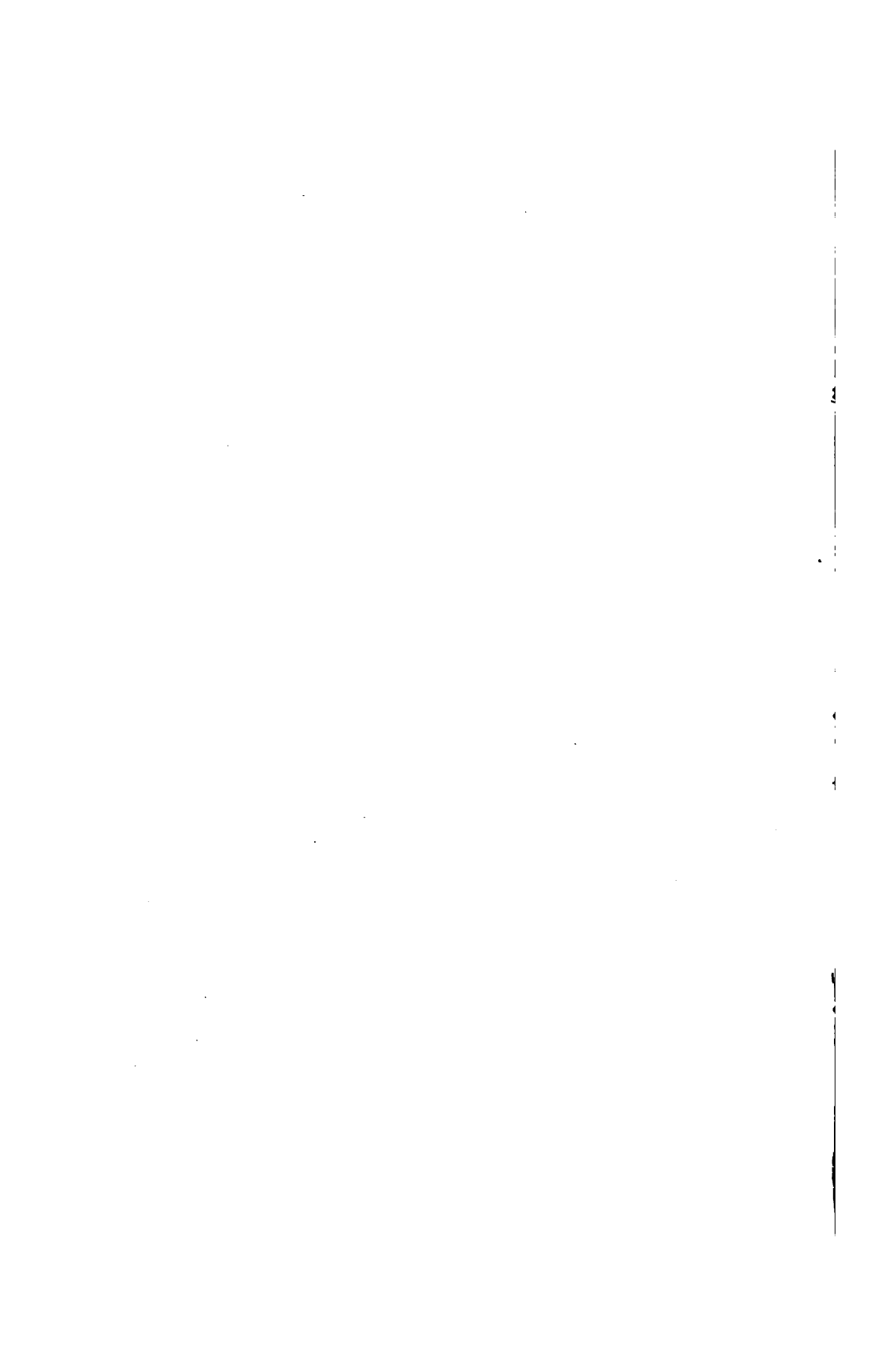
Lieutenant: E. A. DIGBY.

Lieutenant: F. W. G. GORE.

OFFICERS OF THE ROUGH RIDERS (XXTH BATTALION IMPERIAL YEOMANRY).



*Top row—reading from left to right—*Lt. C. J. Fauvel, Lt. P. T. Bell, Lt. G. Moore, Lt. Hon. L. A. Milles, Lt. R. Wynne, Lt. H. B. Magniac, Lt. J. W. S. Dalrymple-Clarke, Lt. L. Pelly, Lt. J. H. Patterson, Capt. H. W. M. Bonham, Lt. F. A. B. McCrea.
*Middle Row—*Lt. Lord Zouch, Lt. H. G. McKenzie Rew, Major H. A. Anderson, Lt.-Col. R. B. Colvin, Capt. Viscount F. C. Maitland, Capt. T. Walcot, Capt. C. H. Colvin, Lt. D. C. Barmingham.
*Bottom Row—*Lt. F. A. Digby, Lt. C. S. Cookson, Lt. W. L. Thursby, Lt. E. D. Johnson.



76TH COMPANY.

Captain: C. H. COLVIN (Captain 4th Battalion Essex Regiment).

Lieutenant: J. H. PATTERSON.

Lieutenant: W. L. THURSBY (late 4th Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers).

Lieutenant: H. B. MAGNIAC (late 3rd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment).

Lieutenant: L. PELLY.

78TH COMPANY.

Captain: H. W. M. BONHAM (late Colonel Grenadier Guards).

Lieutenant: G. MOORE (Lieutenant-Colonel 5th Battalion Middlesex Regiment).

Lieutenant: H. G. MCKENZIE REW (1st V. Battalion Royal Fusiliers).

Lieutenant: LORD ZOUCHE (2nd V.B. Royal Sussex Regiment).

Lieutenant: O. B. RICKARDS.

79TH COMPANY.

Captain: B. H. PIERCY (late 12th Lancers).

Lieutenant: J. W. S. DALRYMPLE-CLARK (Major Surma Valley Light Horse, Vols.).

Lieutenant: E. D. JOHNSON (1st City of London R.V.B.).

Lieutenant: F. A. B. MCCREA (late Captain 3rd Battalion Hampshire Regiment).

Lieutenant: C. S. COOKSON (late Captain 1st V.B. Royal Lancashire Regiment).

Nearly all the above officers had previously held, or were holding, commissions, but willingly accepted subordinate rank to that which they had previously held in order to proceed to South Africa.

The ranks were filled by all sorts and conditions of men—gentlemen of independent means, old soldiers, sailors, clerks, mechanics, farmers—in fact, there was hardly a trade or profession which was not represented.

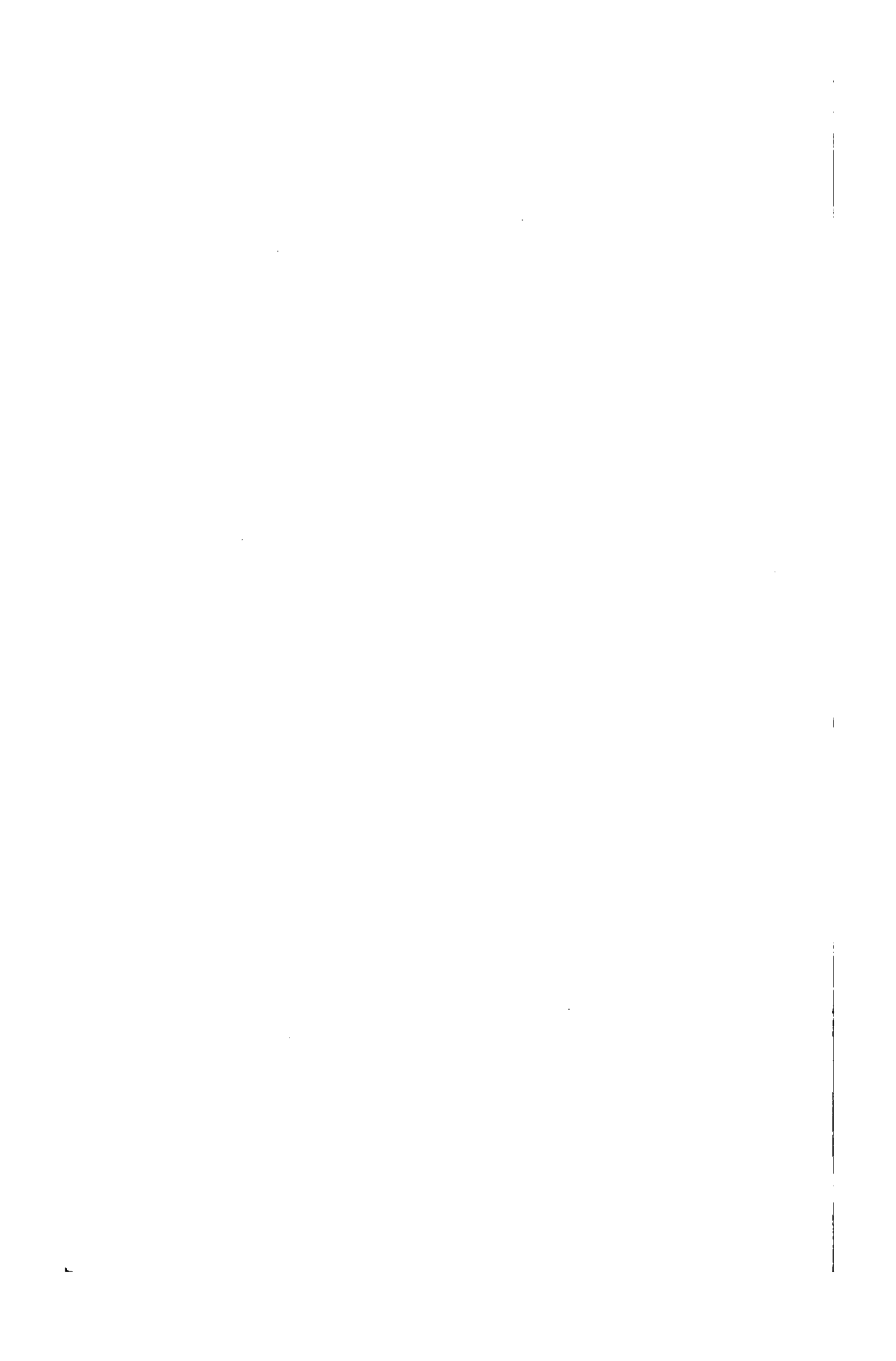
The rapidity with which every one fell into his place was extraordinary, and even more wonderful still was the strong "esprit de corps" which took possession of the men, and the pride with which the badge of the Regiment (a Rough Riders Spur worn on the head-dress) was displayed. From the first moment they were enrolled, their one ambition was to get to the front, and all worked as hard as possible in order to become efficient soldiers in the minimum of time.

The first fortnight in March was occupied in attesting, clothing, and equipping the men. The uniform consisted of a slouch hat, khaki serge jacket, Bedford cord breeches, brown field boots, spurs, and a heavy overcoat, all of which were, of course, provided at Government expense. The equipment consisted of a rifle, bayonet, belt, and bandolier.

On March 17th the Rough Riders left London for Aldershot, where they occupied quarters in the West Cavalry Barracks under the temporary command of Major H. A. Barclay; Colonel Colvin was at this time D.A.A.G. at the Imperial Yeomanry Headquarters, and was, therefore, unable to assume command of the Battalion. The Rough Riders took over horses and saddles from the 7th Hussars and the 2nd Dragoon Guards, and immediately commenced hard work in the



THE TROOPER "CANADA," SOUTHAMPTON, APRIL 14TH, 1900.



Long Valley, the Riding School, and the Barrack Square. Much credit is due to Major Barclay for the zeal and energy with which he devoted himself to the training of the men, and for the state of efficiency to which he brought the Battalion during the brief term of his command.

Colonel Colvin joined the Rough Riders early in April, and on the 10th an Inspection was held by Major-General Hemming, who expressed himself as highly pleased with the general appearance and smartness of the Battalion, and wished the men God-speed in South Africa. On the same afternoon each man received a parcel of warm clothing from Lady Maitland, which she, Mrs. Cecil Colvin, and other ladies had collected. The non-commissioned officers of 79 Company were presented with field glasses collected by Mrs. Piercy.

The order for embarkation had now arrived, and on April 14th, the Rough Riders, filled with enthusiasm at the prospect of getting to the front, paraded dismounted in marching order at 4.30 a.m. There was much cheering and singing as the Battalion, headed by the band of the Durham Light Infantry, marched to the station, where they entrained for Southampton. The short journey was pleasantly and speedily accomplished, the train drawing up close to the s.s. "Canada," numbered Transport 69, which was to convey the Rough Riders and other troops to Cape Town.

All was now hurry and excitement. Officers' chargers had to be hoisted aboard, kits and baggage stowed in the hold, and rifles packed away in the Armoury. While all this was going on Major-General Sir George White arrived from South Africa, and the crowds which came to welcome him afterwards waited

to give the "Canada" a hearty send-off. Major Barclay took leave of the Rough Riders, with whom he was very popular, and from whom he received a most enthusiastic reception as he left the ship.

Final farewells were then said, the last rope was cast loose, and at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon the "Canada" swung away from the quay. Owing to a falling tide the transport was unfortunately left on the mud, where she remained for nearly two hours in spite of all efforts to get her off. This misfortune did not, however, in the least damp the ardour of the men, who continued cheering and singing patriotic songs until nearly 6 o'clock, when the "Canada" ultimately got under weigh, and, amidst great enthusiasm, steamed off down Southampton Water.

Besides the Rough Riders the transport took out a large number of details for other Battalions, including drafts for the Middlesex, Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, and Irish Imperial Yeomanry, as well as Electrical Engineers—altogether about 1,500 men.

In addition there were 30 nurses of the Army Service Nursing Reserve, and the Doctors and Staff of the Welsh Hospital. Major Golightly, D.S.O., was placed in charge of all details, Major Anderson took command of the Rough Riders, while Colonel Colvin was in command of the whole of the troops on board. Lord Maitland was appointed Ship's Adjutant and Lieutenant Patterson Adjutant of the Rough Riders for the voyage. Captain Maddox was the Commander of the ship, which was a Dominion Liner capable of making over 300 miles a day.

The men did not at all like the idea of sleeping down in their stuffy quarters, and on the first evening hundreds came up with the intention of sleeping on deck. To their disgust, however, they were quickly



THE TROOPER "CANADA," SOUTHAMPTON, APRIL 14TH, 1900.

bundled down below again, as sleeping on deck was known to be the cause of many fatal cases of pneumonia.

The first day at sea was Easter Sunday, but as the ship had now commenced to roll, and many of the men were ill, no Church Parade was held. Lieutenant Moore conducted a voluntary service in the afternoon. The men were mustered and told off to their fire stations, where they assembled on various occasions during the voyage on the alarm being sounded. Time was not allowed to be wasted on board. Reveillé was at 6 a.m., and Parades—Signalling Classes, Physical Drill. Lectures on Scouting and Horse Management, etc.—comprised each morning's work. To give the men some practice in musketry, barrels and boxes were thrown overboard, and these made excellent moving targets, and afforded splendid practice in sight adjustment. The afternoons were generally devoted to sports, blind-fold boxing competitions being a very favourite form of amusement with the men.

The "Canada" arrived at Las Palmas on April 19th at about 1 p.m., and was at once boarded by a naval officer, who ordered the ship to get away as quickly as possible, and without coaling. No one was permitted to go ashore, and no liquor or fruit was allowed to come on board, but a brisk trade was done in cigars and tobacco. While here, the "Austral," No. 93 Transport, arrived on her way home with sick and wounded from Ladysmith. The "Canada" greeted her with some lusty cheers, to which there was but a feeble response.

Three days after leaving Las Palmas, the first death among the Rough Riders took place. The "Canada" was then off the Gold Coast, and the weather was extremely hot and oppressive. Trooper Moger, of

76 Company, after a short illness, died from pneumonia on April 22nd. The following evening his mortal remains, enveloped in a Union Jack, were borne through the ranks of his sorrowing comrades, and placed on a platform at the ship's side. The engines were stopped, and in the midst of a most profound and solemn silence, Colonel Colvin read the beautiful "Burial Service at Sea." At the words "We commit our brother to the deep" the body was lowered, three volleys were fired, and the sad strains of the "Last Post" sounded a farewell to the comrade thus lost so early.

The "Canada" then resumed her voyage, but was again brought to a standstill on April 27th, when Trooper Featherstonehaugh, of the Irish Yeomanry, died, and was buried in the evening with the same ceremony.

The Commanding Officer was not satisfied with the sanitary and hospital arrangements on the ship, and ordered a board to assemble to investigate the matter. As a result the hospital was found to be unsatisfactory. Trooper Barker, of the Rough Riders, who was very ill, was at once removed, and fortunately recovered through the care of a nursing sister, who, to the regret of all who knew her, succumbed to enteric fever soon after landing in South Africa.

The Principal Medical Officer on board asked for volunteers for inoculation as a preventative against enteric fever. As he did not personally recommend this, but few availed themselves of the opportunity. His opinion was afterwards justified by the fact that those who were inoculated were found to be predisposed to the disease, and when attacked by it, suffered more severely than those who had not been inoculated.



THE ROUGH RIDERS' CAMP AT MAITLAND.

During the voyage several impromptu concerts were held, which were a great success—many of the men singing remarkably well. A feature of these concerts was the band of the Rough Riders, which was the only band taken out to South Africa by the Imperial Yeomanry. Lieutenant Fauvel also gave a conjuring entertainment, but owing to the explosion of a bad egg in his trouser pocket, the performance came to an abrupt end, and was never afterwards repeated.

On April 30th, the weather became much cooler, and sports were held. The Rough Riders were successful in various events, pulling over the Irish Yeomanry in the final of the tug-of-war, and also winning the boxing competition, while the officers of the Rough Riders pulled over a team composed of the officers of the other units on board.

The "Canada" was now approaching her destination, and soon after dawn on May 3rd, land was sighted and the ship's sides were quickly crowded with eager faces greedily drinking in the impressive scene before them. Away up in the indescribable misty purple of a South African morning, loomed the bold outline of Table Mountain, while in the foreground rose the masts and funnels of a vast fleet of warships, transports, and merchantmen. It was a sight to stir the emotions of even the least imaginative, and certainly no Rough Rider will ever forget the impression made by his first glimpse of South Africa. The ship remained at anchor in the Bay all day, as there was no room in the docks. The sunset witnessed that evening from the ship was a remarkably fine one, and the exquisite tints of the sky and surpassingly beautiful colouring of Table Mountain, called forth exclamations of wonder and admiration even from the most seasoned travellers.

CHAPTER II.

THE "Canada" moved into dock on May 4th, and on the morning of the 5th disembarkation commenced. While this was busily proceeding everything was enveloped in a clammy white mist, which gradually lifted until it finally rested on the top of Table Mountain, where it formed what is locally known as "The Cloth."

When all was ready, the Rough Riders were paraded on the quay, and marched through Cape Town out to Maitland Camp, which is about seven miles from the docks. Here their camp was pitched near another Yeomanry Battalion, Paget's Horse. There were about 2,000 yeomen altogether at Maitland Camp, the Yeomanry base, which was under the command of Colonel Graham. The Rough Riders remained here for a little over three weeks, and during that time were constantly exercised in drills and manoeuvres.

Maitland was principally noted for its sand-storms, which blew almost incessantly; its flies, which abounded in myriads and settled on everything, and its malodorous smells, which permeated all parts of the camp. As a result of these, dysentery and diarrhoea were very prevalent, and broke out immediately amongst the Rough Riders. All the officers, with two exceptions, fell victims to one or other of these complaints; Lieutenant Rickards became so ill that he was invalided home.



THE ROUGH RIDERS AT MAITLAND.

On May 7th, 480 Hungarian cobs and a few Argentines, were disembarked at Cape Town from the s.s. "Monkeaton," and taken over by the Battalion. They were about 14 hands high, and looked weedy and anything but fit when they landed. The majority appeared to be only half broken in. The saddlery, which had been brought from England with the Battalion, was now issued. The saddle was of the Austrian military pattern, and the bridle was the Colonial Pelham.

The nights were sometimes made very lively, as the Hungarians developed a propensity for stampeding about midnight, and on several occasions dashed madly in among the tents, causing considerable confusion.

On May 14th, the Commandant ordered the Rough Riders to take part in a Brigade Field Day, and as this was the first mounted parade since the arrival of the Hungarians, the horses were exceedingly fresh and at first almost unmanageable, as they strongly objected to the saddles, and, above all, to the rifles banging against their sides. As a result many men and horses came down, and Trooper Ebsworth, of 78 Company, was severely kicked on the head after being thrown. While at Maitland, both men and horses were well fed—the men's rations consisting of plenty of fresh bread, meat, tea or coffee, sugar and jam, while potatoes or dried vegetables, bacon, ham, and other extras were occasionally issued. A ration of rum was also given out once or twice a week. The latter was most gratifying in a cup of hot coffee after exposure to wet and fatigue. The forage allowed was 10lbs. of oats and 9lbs. of hay.

On May 19th, the whole Camp was greatly stirred and excited by the news of the relief of Mafeking. This happy event occasioned much rejoic-

ing, and concerts and sing-songs were held both day and night. On the 21st, the Battalion, headed by its trumpeters, rode through Wynburg, and on past Mr. Cecil Rhodes' house. The whole route was profusely decorated with flags and bunting in honour of the relief of Mafeking, and the march of the Rough Riders, heralded by their trumpeters, created considerable interest. The following day (Tuesday, 22nd) a parade was held for instruction in fitting equipment and kit on the saddle. Places had to be found for overcoat, waterproof sheet, blanket, spare clothes, boots, cleaning requisites, well filled wallets, haversack, nose bag, picketing gear, heel rope, "built up" rope, two hay nets, shoe case, with horse shoe and nails, mess tin, and water bottle! When all this paraphernalia was finally arranged, very little remained visible of the poor little Hungarian, and he looked more like an animated Christmas tree than anything else. In addition to this paraphernalia, the horse had, of course, to carry the weight of the man, fully equipped with rifle, bayonet, and heavy bandolier, holding some 200 rounds of ammunition. Small wonder that many of these unfortunate animals died. Indeed, the only wonder is that even some survived under the strain of heavy loads, long marches, and insufficient food—sometimes only getting 3lbs. of oats a day and nothing else, as there was no hay or grass to be had. Latterly, it was realised that the horses could not possibly march under such a load, so carts were provided, in which wallets and all articles of kit were placed, and the horse had nothing to carry but the fully equipped man. Of course, when the horse was so terribly overloaded, sore backs were numerous, but it was found that the Austrian saddle never gave a sore back when stripped.

The Queen's Birthday was celebrated at Cape Town on May 25th, and the Rough Riders took part with the other troops of the garrison in a march through the town, and eventually marched past the Governor (Sir A. Milner) on the Parade Ground.

About this time the Boers and Cape rebels commenced blowing up the railway, and so threatened the lines of communication. Information was received that an attempt would be made to wreck Durban Road Bridge, so Lieutenant Patterson and some 20 men rode off to guard it. Nothing, however, occurred. This was the first military duty performed by the Rough Riders in South Africa.

The Battalion had already had one or two foretastes of what wet weather could be like in South Africa, but it had its first real experience on the night of the 26th, when the rain came down in torrents, and the whole camp was inundated. Many tents were completely blown away, while those which still stood intact were flooded, and a muddy stream of water, which had already drained the mule lines, swept through them. All this discomfort did not, however, in the least upset the men, who sat cheerfully most of the night on the ruins of their tents, singing "Home, Sweet Home," and other popular and appropriate songs.

On Monday, May 28th, the eagerly awaited order to leave Maitland Camp for the front at last arrived, and on the following day, after a considerable struggle with kit, the right half of the Battalion (72 and 76 Companies), together with the Battalion Staff, marched off from Maitland at about 2.30. Durban Road was reached at about 5.30, the "Christmas Trees" having shed a considerable amount of small articles on the

way. Here the troops bivouacked for the night, and next morning resumed their march to Stellenbosch, which was about thirteen miles further on. At this place they were joined by the left half of the Battalion (78 and 79 Companies) under Major Anderson, and all remained here for about ten days.

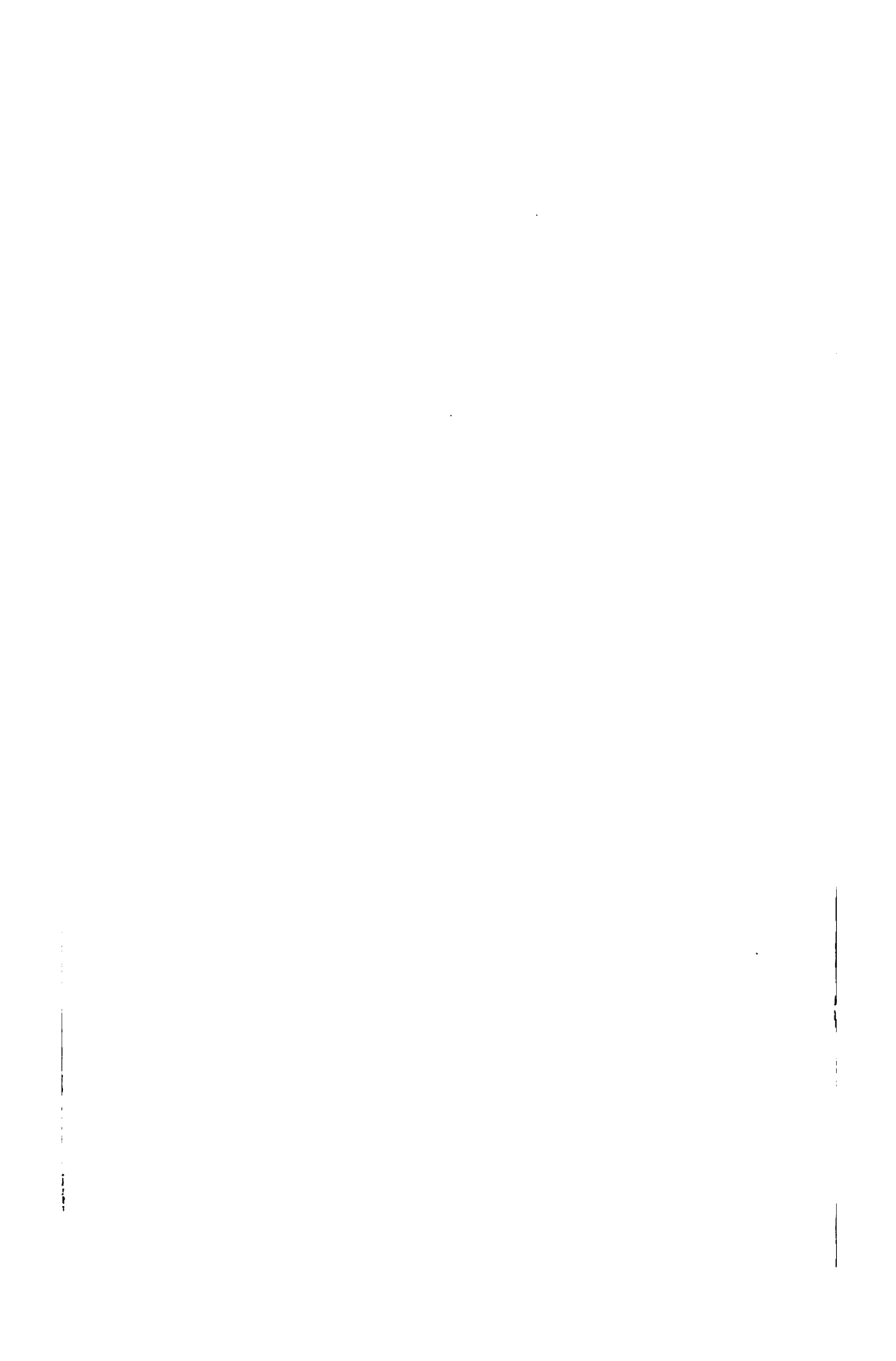
This camp was a vast improvement on Maitland, and everyone was delighted with the change. Although Stellenbosch obtained rather a bad name during the war as the home of the incapables, it is one of the prettiest villages in South Africa. All the streets are lined with avenues of trees which afford a delightful shade to the dusty trooper, while clear rivulets run on either side of the road. During the ten days the Battalion remained here, a lot of hard work was accomplished, and great progress was made towards efficiency. Route marches, field firing, outpost duty, and range practice took up every moment of the day.

On Sunday, June 10th, the right half of the Battalion, with the Battalion Staff, struck camp for Wellington, and reached Paarl, after a march of seventeen miles, via Lady Grey. The Regiment dismounted at intervals, and led their horses for about one-third of the journey. This saved the overloaded horses tremendously, and also helped to keep the men fit.

Paarl is a charming little village of old Dutch houses, forming one long street of some miles in length. The Staff and the two Companies bivouacked for the night under some fir trees near the railway Station. A staunch loyalist kindly placed an empty cottage at the disposal of the troops, and as the nights were bitterly cold, thirteen officers and ninety men squeezed themselves thankfully into the four small rooms.



THE ROUGH RIDERS LEAVING MAITLAND CAMP FOR THE FRONT.



Next day the route was resumed to Wellington, which was reached after a fourteen mile march. Here the 72nd and 76th Companies were soon joined by the other two Companies of the Battalion. The camp at Wellington was pitched near the Station, as a further move to the front was early expected. The site proved to be a bad one, as when rain fell, which it very soon did, the whole camp became a quagmire. Sickness was still very prevalent in the Battalion owing to the continual wet weather. Just at this time, in order to clear the hospitals, the down trains to Cape Town were bringing a large number of sick from Bloemfontein. Many of the poor fellows were in a terrible state, having only the ordinary rations of tinned meat and hard biscuit to eat, after being on a diet of milk up to the time of entraining. Some kindly disposed local ladies, organised by Miss Mary Cairncross, met the trains on their arrival, and gave the men milk, tea, and other comforts, thus no doubt saving many a valuable life. It is worth mentioning here that acts of kindness and great hospitality were constantly shown to the troops by the loyalists in the Colony. In fact, the latter said that they felt that they could never do enough for men who had come so far to protect them.

The country round Wellington was very attractive, surrounded as it was by high mountains. Oranges and other fruits grew in great profusion in the neighbourhood, but could not be harvested, owing to the scarcity of labour. While the Battalion was at Wellington the usual work and exercises went on, and the men became daily more efficient.

On the 14th June, the Resident Magistrate at Paarl applied for an armed force to keep the peace, which he was afraid would be broken by the members

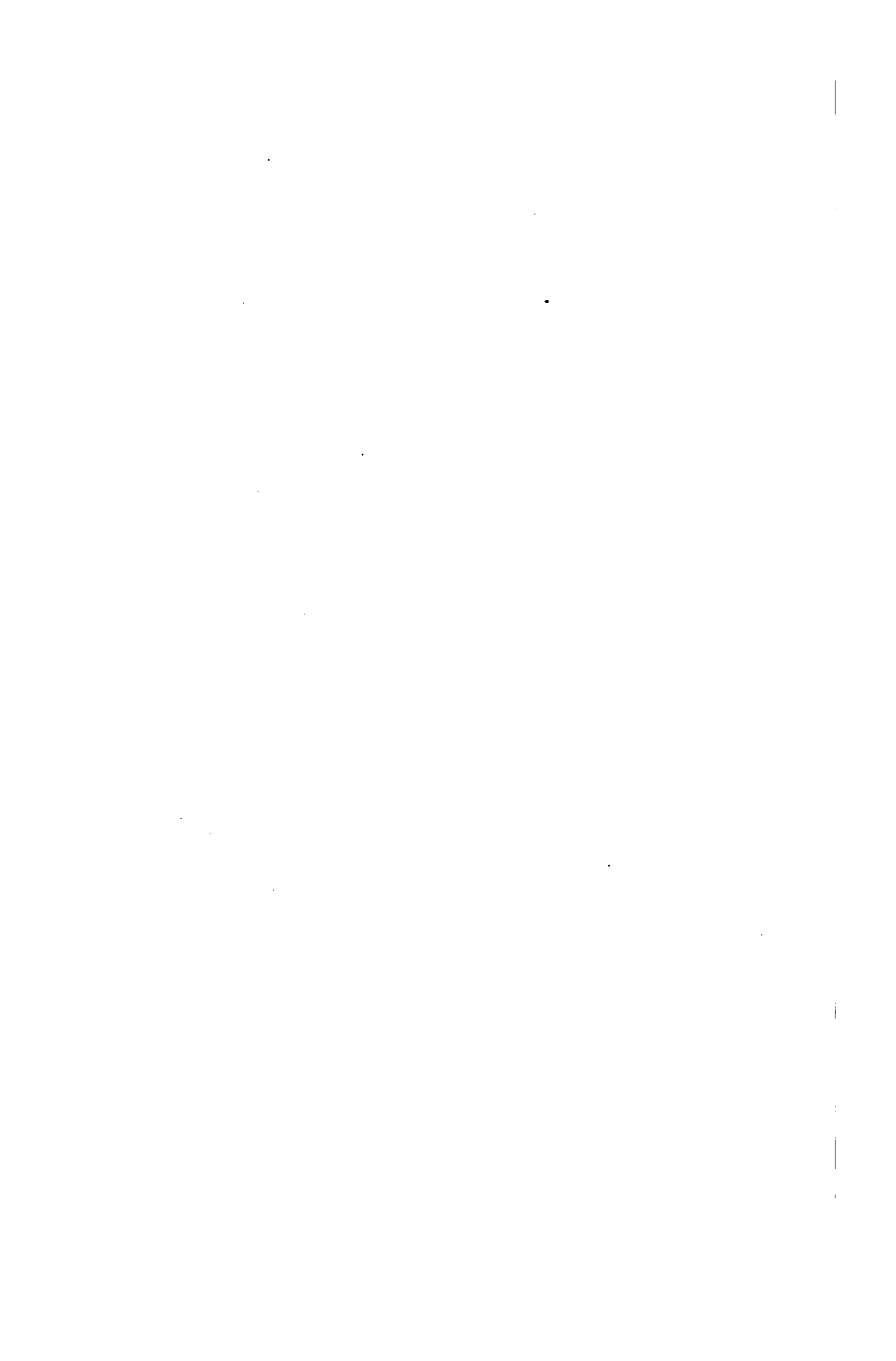
of the Bond, who were to hold a meeting at Paarl on the 15th. Accordingly, two mounted and two dismounted troops were dispatched to and stationed by Lady Grey Bridge. No disturbance took place, and the force returned next day to Wellington with the thanks of the local authorities, who stated that the Yeomanry had by their presence preserved tranquility and order during a time of unrest.

One day while still at Wellington, the camp was thrown into a state of excitement by hearing the report of firearms right in the very midst of it. On investigation, however, it was found that the noise was caused by the premature discharge of a revolver belonging to one of the men. Through this explosion it was discovered that many of the men had provided themselves with a cheap and dangerous pattern of this weapon. These were at once confiscated by order of the Commanding Officer. A couple of days after this incident another loud and mysterious report was heard in the midst of the camp. This time, on investigation being made by the Adjutant, it was found that the noise was caused by the sudden explosion of the tin containing an emergency ration!

It was about this time, viz., the middle of June, that orders began to come in for the various Companies to proceed northwards. These were very welcome, as all were eager for action, but the Battalion would naturally have much preferred to remain together under their own Commanding Officer, Colonel Colvin. This, however, was not possible, as the various Companies were despatched in different directions, and except for a few hours at Bloemfontein, the Rough Riders never all met together again. From this point, therefore, the doings of each Company must be followed separately.



ROUGH RIDERS' CAMP AT STELLENBOSCH.



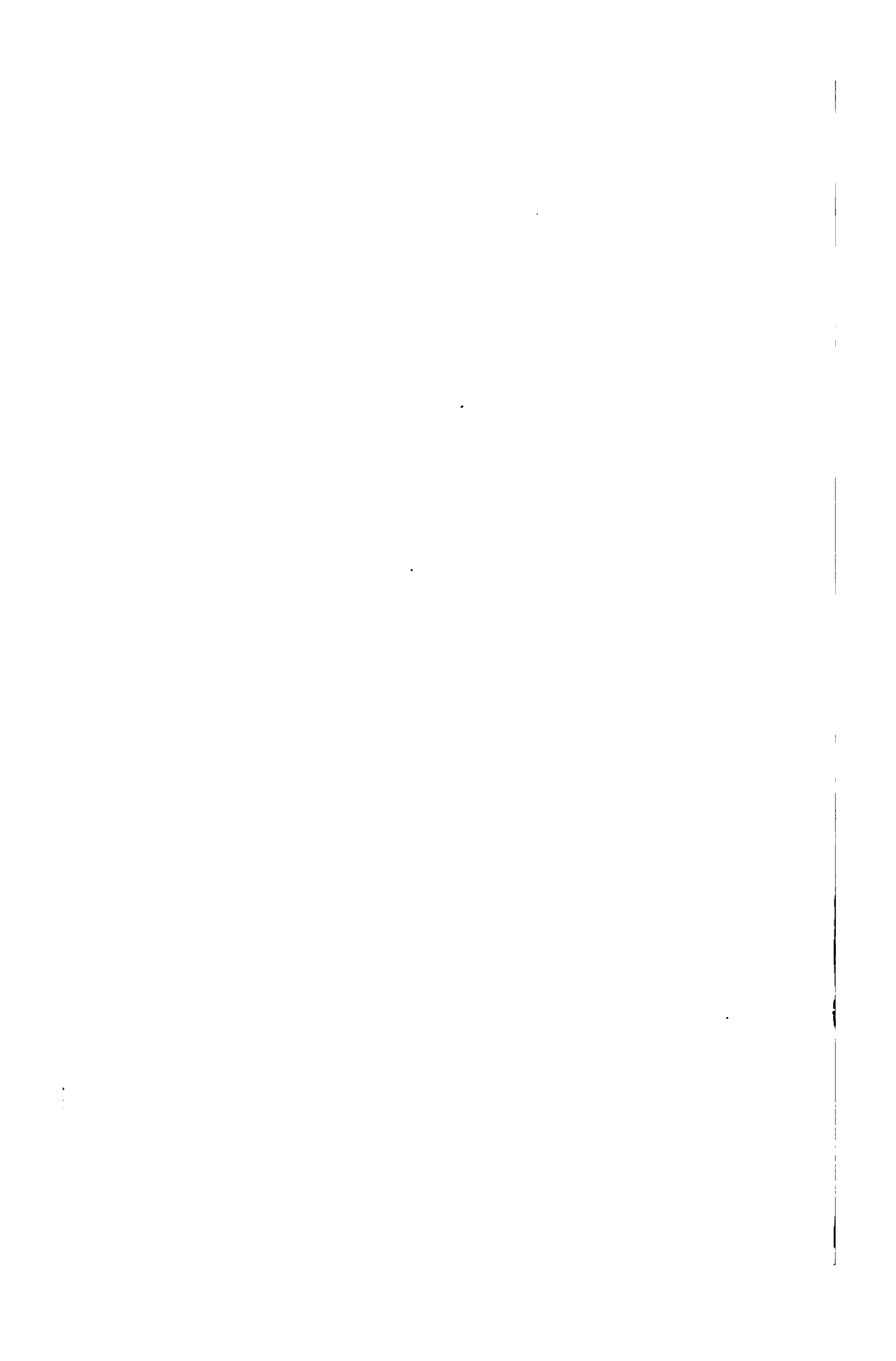
78TH COMPANY.

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78TH COMPANY AT FISCHER'S FARM.



CHAPTER III.

78TH COMPANY.

ON June 17th, 1900, an order came at last to Wellington for one Company of the Battalion to be sent to Bloemfontein at once. The Colonel selected 78, or Captain Bonham's Company, a fact that was much appreciated by the men of the Company when they were told they were to start for the front on the following day. The whole of the next morning was spent in packing up, and entraining the horses, of which there were 115. These were placed in trucks which held ten each. While all this was going on a train arrived from Bloemfontein which brought the distressing news that five thousand men were ill in hospital there.

At 1.30 78 Company (four officers and one hundred and eight rank and file), headed by the bugles of the Battalion, and accompanied by the Battalion Staff, who were also going to Bloemfontein, marched from camp to the station.

During the three days journey to Bloemfontein, a great deal of difficulty was experienced in watering and feeding the horses. The door of the horse truck had to be cautiously opened and a man slipped in between the horses. The door was then quickly closed again, and buckets passed in to the man through a lower opening under the door. He then proceeded to water each horse as best he could in the dark. There

were no lanterns available, and the only light was that given by a candle held up through the aperture. Nose-bags had then to be put on every horse, and as there were ten or twelve loose animals in every truck, it may be imagined that this was by no means an easy task.

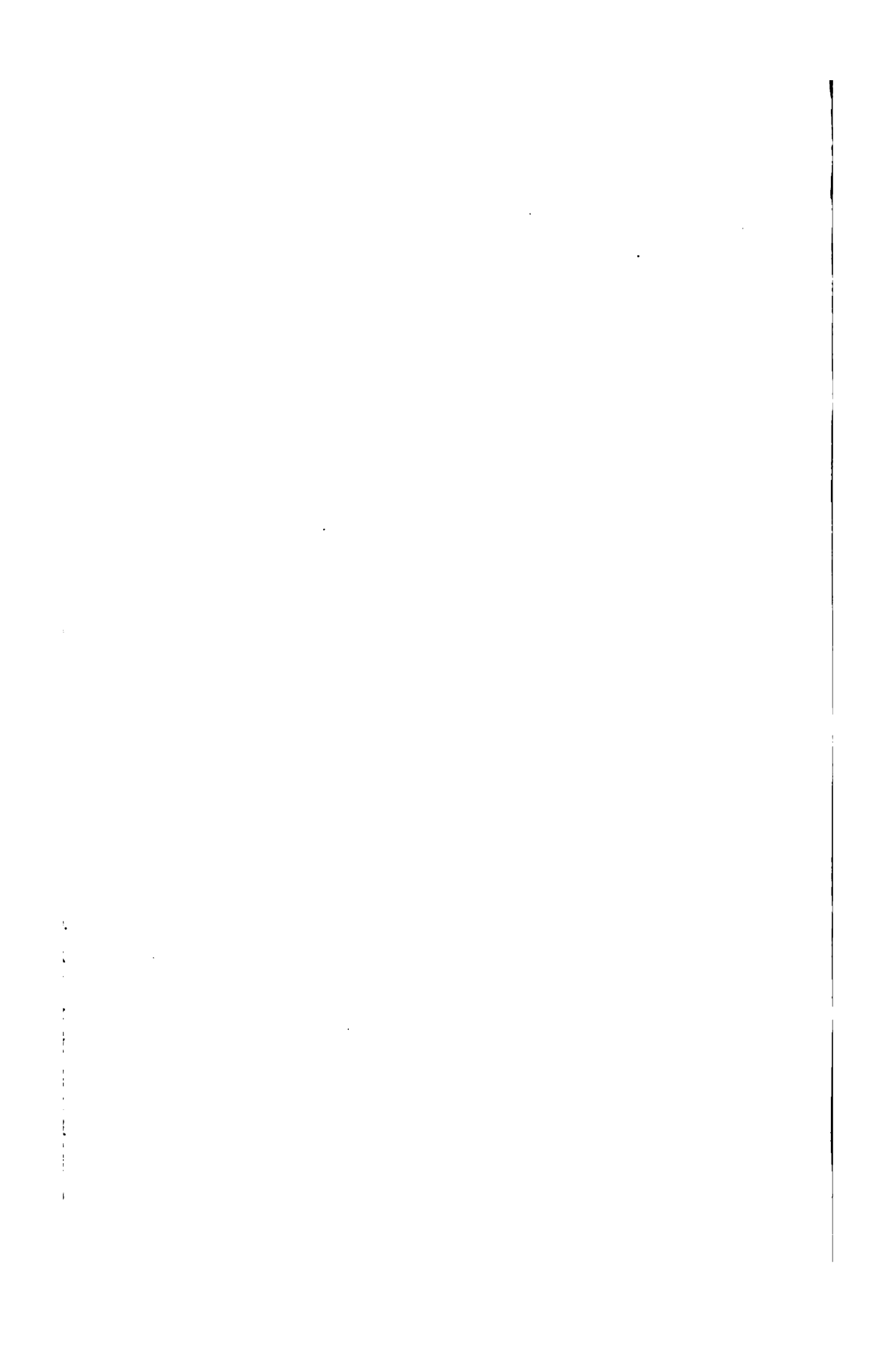
During the day of the 19th, the first train that had left Mafeking since the siege was passed. It contained Eloff, nephew of Kruger, and other prisoners who were captured there. The line was strictly guarded along its whole length, the little white tents of the picquets being dotted along by the way at intervals. Each culvert and bridge was also occupied. The train went very slowly, so that the men were often able to get out and run along by its side!

The Orange River was crossed at about 11 p.m. on the night of the 20th, and in the brilliant moonlight the scenery at this point looked very fine. Next morning, the whole character of the country was observed to have completely changed to one of a most uninteresting nature. All round was a scorched, level plain, out of which abruptly rose hills of barren stone, while here and there a flat-topped farmhouse was passed, surrounded by a few trees and some miserable looking cattle. What these poor animals found to feed on remained a mystery, as there was no pasture of any kind to be seen, except a few stubbly bushes.

Bloemfontein was reached at 10.30 on the morning of June 21st—the shortest day in the year in these latitudes. The Company detrained and camped at the Imperial Yeomanry Depôt, three miles west of the town. Here they learned that they were detailed for outpost duty. On the following day, therefore, they left for Boeshman's Kop, thirteen miles



ON TREK.



east of Bloemfontein, where they relieved a detachment of Roberts's Horse. The road to this place was strewn with carcasses and débris of all kinds, marking out the general advance on Pretoria. That night 78 Company had their first sleep up country without tents, and they felt the cold intensely, as it was now mid-winter.

Next morning the Company was divided. No. 3 and No. 4 troops, under Captain Bonham and Lieutenant Lord Zouche, remained at Boeshman's Kop, while No. 1 and No. 2 troops marched on to Sanna's post, six miles further east, and relieved a detachment of Marshall's Horse. Here the track of war was still more evident, and the veldt was strewn with relics of the recent disaster to General Broadwood's column. Dead horses lay in heaps around the camp, contaminating the atmosphere. In one spot a whole team of artillery horses lay in regular order, just as they had fallen on that ill-fated day. The garrison at Sanna's Post, guarding the Bloemfontein Waterworks, consisted of the 2nd Gloucester Regiment, the 43rd Battery R.F.A., and the half Company of the 78th Company I.Y.

Just at this time there was a marked lull in the campaign, and although 78 Company was now in the midst of the enemy's country, fighting was rare. The work of the two half Companies at Sanna's Post and Boeshman's Kop consisted of patrolling the country around Bloemfontein as far as Thaba Nchu, searching farms for buried rifles and ammunition, and acting as escort to guns and convoys. 78th Company had also to guard the water-pipe along its whole length from Sanna's Post to Bloemfontein. A number of steam traction engines were utilised to convey the heavily laden trucks from Bloemfontein to the posts beyond the Waterworks.

On June 14th the Company started rebel hunting, which was not a very pleasant occupation. Farms were visited without any warning, and apparently harmless farmers carried off from their families on suspicion of being in some way connected with the enemy. The first to be taken in this manner was J. Steyl, who lived on his farm at Kirkentillock, about ten miles distant. Information had been received that this man was in league with the enemy, so a party was sent out to arrest him. As the Yeomen approached the farm they met Steyl riding towards them. Now this in itself was a breach of the law, as no Boer was allowed to ride or leave his farm without a pass. He was promptly arrested, and escorted back to camp, where he had lunch in the officers' tent, and was then taken on to Bloemfontein, where he remained a prisoner.

On the 25th, a patrol was sent out to search a farm twenty miles to the south. They, however, returned empty-handed, after digging and searching all day for buried rifles and ammunition.

On these expeditions, when any horses were found branded with the British Government mark, they were immediately seized and taken away. Any other horses likely to be of use to the troops were also taken, but for these a receipt was given. The order had not yet been issued to clear the country of horses entirely; it was consequently easy for the Boers to procure remounts whenever they needed them.

A very curious spectacle was witnessed on July 5th, when four hundred Basutos passed through the camp at Sanna's Post on their way home. They had been employed on the railway, and now, after having been paid off were returning "en masse" to Basutoland. Their dress was most grotesque, and they were laden

with a miscellaneous collection of rubbish, which they evidently prized very highly. Laughing and jabbering to each other and to themselves, they crossed the drift in single file. The costume of one huge fellow, who had a broad smile on his face and seemed exceedingly pleased with himself, was particularly ludicrous. He was adorned in a large brilliantly coloured blanket, an old red tunic, a helmet of the Derby Regiment, and a pair of Army boots. His legs were swathed in pieces of a corn sack representing puttees, one end of which trailed a yard behind him in the mud of the river bank. He was loaded with treasures and curiosities of all kinds, including a soldiers' mess tin, an old haversack, a Kaffir cooking pot, a large stick, a lump of iron, two pieces of wood, some rags, and a pair of socks, which he wore round his neck! Another, when he reached the Modder River, threw himself down and drank greedily of the muddy fluid from which the river gets its name. This fellow was attired in an old khaki coat with sleeves cut off short at the elbows, dirty white breeches, with half his shirt hanging out, blue puttees tied with string below the knees, brown boots, and a scarlet turban. A green sock on one foot and a yellow one on the other worn outside his puttees, completed this quiet and elegant outfit! The whole body of four hundred filed steadily past in one long stream of curiously attired humanity, staggering under the weight of the varied assortment of articles which they were carefully carrying back to their native land.

Soon after this, on July 6th, a change occurred in the small garrison at Sanna's Post. The 43rd Battery Royal Field Artillery left for Bloemfontein, and the Canadian Battery, under the command of Major Hurdman, replaced them.

At Boeshman's Kop on Sunday, July 15th, as the men were at mid-day stables, word came from the signallers on the top of the Kop that twelve "whites" could be seen on a farm a short distance off. Lieutenant Lord Zouche was hurriedly despatched with a party to "round up" these people. He found on arriving there that it was only a meeting of Kaffirs dressed in white clothes, for whom a service was being conducted by a Kaffir parson.

On the 19th a prisoner was brought in to the post at Boeshman's Kop. He stated that he had deserted from his commando in the Transvaal to come and see his mother at Bloemfontein, he was sent into the town and imprisoned there, as he was suspected of being a spy. On the same day a messenger arrived from the Intelligence Department at Bloemfontein with an order for the arrest of two farmers at Kalfontein at dawn next morning, as 25,000 rounds of ammunition had been found on their farm. Lieutenant Lord Zouche was accordingly sent out at 9.30 p.m. with twelve men. The night was exceedingly dark, and for a considerable distance the way had to be found by following a wire fence.

Fortunately, at about 12.30, the party struck the toll house by the Bridge over the Modder at Krantz Kraal. Here lived a Scotchman, McInery, who used to collect the tolls before the war broke out, and now often acted as guide to the Company. After resting until 2.45 Lord Zouche's party set off again under the guidance of McInery's son, a youth of 16, and continued their journey through the darkness. Kalfontein was reached at 3.45 just before dawn. The houses were quietly surrounded, and three men found asleep in bed were bagged. These gave no trouble, but one of

them declared that it was his brother who was the culprit, and most obligingly pointed out his house. This, too, was surrounded, and the man taken in bed, thus making four prisoners in all. The Yeomen, with their captives, then returned to camp, and the men were sent on into Bloemfontein. After a very short imprisonment there, they were released and allowed to return to their farms, as a rather curious explanation had come to light with regard to the buried ammunition. It turned out that the culprit was none other than General Pole-Carew! After some operations near Brandfort he had ordered all the ammunition captured there should be buried out of the way on these farms.

On July 24th, during a patrol to Thaba Nchu, trooper Dawson was thrown from his horse and broke his leg.

The 78th Company lost their first man in South Africa on July 29th, when Trooper Goddard died of enteric fever at Bloemfontein. He had been Lieutenant Moore's servant, and was a good and keen soldier. He was taken ill at Sanna's Post, and lay at first in the hospital tent at the Gloucester's camp, where he was visited by the officers and men of his Company. He was then removed in the ambulance wagon to Bloemfontein, and his friends and comrades little thought, as he was being carried off, that they would never see him again. He was buried in Bloemfontein Cemetery, and a handsome stone was erected over his grave by his comrades. The number of enteric cases at Bloemfontein at this time was still appalling—though a little less than it had been—and men were being buried every day. The men of 78 Company had been lucky until now in escaping any serious cases, although a number were down with slight attacks.

On July 30th, the two halves of 78 Company were again re-united at Krantz Kraal Bridge, about fifteen miles N.E. of Bloemfontein. Brabant's Horse took over the duties at Sanna's Post, while Boeshman's Kop was left vacant, as the same ground had to be watched from the new camp of the Yeomanry. The intelligence department of the Company consisted of Interpreter Bovey, and three native scouts, Schantz, Lucas, and Zikoe.

CHAPTER IV.

THE camp at Krantz Kraal Bridge was pitched at the point where the Bloemfontein-Winburg Road crosses the Modder River, and 78 Company formed a detached post here. The camp was fortified as well as possible, and everything made secure in the event of an attack. A party who left Sanna's Post later than the others, lost their way in the darkness, amid the numerous winding tributaries of the Modder River. They had to bivouac all night on the banks of one of these, and did not arrive at Krantz Kraal until next morning.

The work here was of the same nature as before, except that the patrols were longer, and the Cossack posts larger and more important. The men found it rather monotonous work sitting on the top of a kopje day after day under a burning sun, and watching the country for miles around until every landmark became impressed on their vision. It was very seldom that anything except still life was seen. The country continued fairly quiet, and it was easy to ride about the neighbourhood with comparative safety in parties of about six. More arrests were made, and several farmers sent into Bloemfontein gaol.

On the 21st Lieutenant Lord Zouche, with a party, arrested a farmer and his three sons on suspicion of collecting men to surprise the camp. They, too, were despatched to Bloemfontein. While searching a farm on August 1st a patrol discovered an ambulance

marked No. 6, No. 14 Bearer Company, 14th Infantry Brigade. This had probably been taken by the Boers at Sanna's Post.

On August 7th news reached the camp that the Boers were breaking south, following Prinsloo's surrender. This caused the Company to become separated again, as Troops No. 1 and 2 were recalled to Sanna's Post, where they occupied their former lines.

A strong patrol left Sanna's Post on August 11th to search for arms at the farm of G. Von Tonder, at Sterkfontein. The weather was very bitter, and a severe sandstorm prevailed. The whole house and buildings were searched, and the garden dug over, but without result. The graveyard was suspected (there is generally one on every farm), but in this case it was left undisturbed. The farmer, like most of his countrymen under the circumstances, was most accommodating and complaisant, and acceded at once to the demands made upon him. He offered fruit and refreshments to the search party as they left the house. A few days afterwards a number of other farms were searched, and a visit was paid to another of the Von Tonder family, who sat in his drawing room, and gave a most graphic account of how he had lain concealed in Kornspruit with only a small body of comrades, about 300 in all, under De Wet, waiting for the arrival of General Broadwood's huge force, which was so successfully ambushed and thrown into utter confusion by the unexpected attack. Von Tonder had now obtained a pass, and was taking a rest at his farm.

General Kelly-Kenny inspected Sanna's Post on August 17th, and expressed his satisfaction with the Yeomanry lines. On the 18th a report came in that several Boers had been seen riding about the

farm called "Maliko," which was owned by a man named Johannes Henning. Lieutenant Rew was sent out with a party to investigate. At first the Boer absolutely refused to admit that he or any of his friends had been off their farms, but an armed man placed on each side of him soon made him alter his statement, and he admitted that he had been riding about. Next there was some difficulty in finding his saddle, and he stoutly denied having one at all, but it was eventually found. The patrol then visited his two sons, men of about thirty years of age, who had been holding a meeting with others on the veldt.

Work of this kind gave the men much riding about the country, and a very strict watch had to be kept on all the farms. In the light of after events there is no doubt that many plots were hatched and plans formed by the Boer husbandmen, who, having given up their obsolete weapons, were merely biding their time and waiting their opportunity.

On August 21st the two troops of 78 Company at Sanna's Post were relieved by a detachment of Royal Irish Rifles Mounted Infantry, so the Company became once more united at Krantz Kraal Bridge. The country was now becoming more unsettled every day, and the detachment at Krantz Kraal was very glad to be strengthened by the rest of the Company.

News was received that De Wet had crossed the Vaal River from the Transvaal, and was advancing South with Phillip Botha to collect men in the Orange River Colony, and it was apparent that a revival of hostility was breaking out around Bloemfontein.

Major Ridley, with a reconnoitring party of Yeomanry, was "held up" at Lindley, which was at no great distance from 78 Company. After a gallant defence against superior numbers he was relieved.

Winburg and Ladybrand were also attacked, and Boers were said to be in the vicinity of the camp at Krantz Kraal. The cossack post on Genandendal, a kopje 1,000 feet high, reported having seen some of them manœuvring about in the vicinity. On August 30th, the enemy began commandeering men, horses, and cattle in the neighbourhood of the camp. Signals flashed with great rapidity from Headquarters, keeping the signallers very busy, and the officers fully engaged deciphering long orders and messages. The garrison at Thabanchu was ordered to fall back on Sanna's Post, and 78 Company was also to retire on that point, if necessary.

The situation was serious, and the next few days were very busy ones, as patrols had to be constantly sent out in all directions round the camp, and frequent visits paid to every house and farm. At midnight, on the 31st, a farmer arrived at the camp, and reported that three or four Boers had been seen on his farm. Lieutenant Lord Zouche was accordingly sent out with sixteen men to catch them, but although search was made all night, no trace of them could be found anywhere.

On September 4th a message came from Bloemfontein to expect an attack that night. Every one, therefore, held himself in readiness, and a somewhat anxious night was spent in the trenches, but the enemy did not show himself. From reports received afterwards, it was seen that he had advanced as far as Waterval Drift on the Modder River, about a mile away, and then finding that night patrols had been sent out, and that the camp was on the alert, had retired again. Matters did not improve, and about this time McNery, the toll collector at Krantz Kraal Bridge, who had often acted as guide to 78 Company,

became apprehensive of danger, and departed for Bloemfontein in his Cape cart, so as to be out of harm's way in case of an unfriendly visit.

On September 6th a patrol under Lieutenant Moore had a skirmish with a party of eight Boers, who were paying a commandeering visit to the farm "Reitfontein," a few miles from camp. After some sharp shooting both patrols retired, the Boers taking away with them Mr. Pertblaus, the owner of "Rietfontein." On the 8th another patrol, under Lieutenant Rew, disturbed a party of six Boers at a farm on some hills to the east of the camp. The patrol gave chase for some distance, but the Boers were well mounted, and succeeded in getting away, aided by their usual and simple device of leaving one or two men behind as a check while the rest cleared off. On September 12th, Lieutenant Lord Zouche, with a non-commissioned officer and six men, was sent to intercept and deliver a message to Colonel White, whose column was somewhere between Houtnek and Brandfort. The message informed Colonel White that Boers were in front of him. After a hard ride in the night, and through country unknown to him, Lord Zouche successfully accomplished his mission on the morning of the 13th. During the night he passed close by the enemy's laager, but, aided by the darkness, he succeeded in evading their attention.

Colonel White had a slight engagement with the enemy, who had been beaten back from the railway line above Brandfort. Several columns were now closing round the Boers. Before dawn on the 13th, Lieutenant Rew occupied a kopje, from which Brandfort was visible, in order to co-operate with the movements in which Colonel White's column was taking part. He should have been relieved at 9 a.m., but the relief party

failed to find him, although they sat on the same hill, which was about half a mile long, all day! This incident shows the difficulty of finding even one's friends on these rocky and scrub covered hills. They formed ideal places for an enemy wishing to escape observation.

The day was one of the hottest experienced, and the change from the sharpness of the early morning to the great heat of the day was keenly felt by all, one man, at least, being placed hors de combat. The duty lasted from 3 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.

On September 19th, 78th Company, consisting of four officers and ninety N.C.O.'s and men, was relieved by a Squadron of Kitchener's Horse, who took up their quarters in the Krantz Kraal camp. 78th Company bivouacked that night at Karee Siding, where there were a number of graves of those who had fallen in a previous encounter with the Boers. Next morning they started off for Brandfort. There were a number of Cape carts, as each troop had one for its spare kit and saddles. There were also the officers Cape carts, besides wagons, ammunition, and water carts. The little column was further augmented by a number of spare horses.

Brandfort was reached the next day, September 19th, and as the Company entered the town they passed a funeral which proved to be that of a man of the East Lancashire Militia, who had just been killed on the railway by a shot from a farm within range. Behind the funeral followed two wagons containing his comrades of the East Lancashire Regiment, who were on their way to burn the farm from which the shot had been fired.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER a few days preparation the Company left Brandfort on September 23rd, to escort a column of supplies for Bultfontein, in the N.W. Orange River Colony. The column was commanded by Colonel Tobin, of the Royal Irish Rifles, and included two guns of the 43rd Battery Royal Field Artillery (Howitzers), three Companies of the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles, and 78th Company Imperial Yeomanry, who were the only mounted men. The whole force did not total much more than 500 of all ranks.

Lieutenant Moore, with his troop, was sent forward at 6 a.m. to get the wagons over the drift, and cover the filling of the water carts. The rest of the Company followed an hour later, and marched fifteen miles to Bester's Farm, where a halt was made at noon. Here the Royal Irish Rifles enjoyed an afternoon's well-earned rest, but there was little repose for the mounted men, who, after riding up and down the flanks all the morning, had now to fix up their horse lines, attend stables, and take their horses a considerable distance along a dusty road to water them at a partly evaporated dam. The water was exceedingly thick and muddy, and cannot have done the animals much good. A wire fence had to be cut in order to enable them to get at it more easily, and even then several sank deep in the mud, and one poor beast sank in up to the eyes. It struggled frantically, and after tremendous exertions, eventually succeeded

in extricating itself. It was quite dark when camp was again reached. The horses were given their evening feed and a rub down, and the men supped frugally on biscuits and "bully beef."

The column was off again at 3.45 a.m., and reached Bultfontein at 4 p.m., after a halt at Waterbroome from 11 to 2.30, no resistance having been met with. The day was very hot, and the road dusty, and the infantry had a wearisome time as they plodded steadily along. Some got rid of their rifles, some their coats and kits, while others took off their boots for greater comfort, and marched along with those articles slung round their necks! The regiment as a whole marched splendidly.

Bultfontein is a dismal little village built in a square with streets leading from it straight on to the open, dusty veldt. There is a church, the usual small inn, a court-house, and a few stores. The town had been besieged a few days before by a small commando of Boers, but was successfully held by Lieutenant Slater and fifteen men of the 15th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, until relieved by the Mounted Infantry of the Derby Regiment under Leveson-Gower, who arrived from Brandfort.

Leaving the Volunteer Company of the Royal Irish Rifles to strengthen the garrison, and having replenished their stores, and so got rid of most of their heavy baggage, the column set off again from Bultfontein the next day, September 25th, at 4 p.m. It was intended that the surplus kit should come on afterwards under a small escort, and join the column at the railway line. The enemy, however, under Commandant Froeman, swooped down on this little party, captured them all, and seized and burnt the wagons. The prisoners were released, after being made

to swear that they would not fight against the Boers again. In the later stages of the war these oaths of neutrality do not seem to have been much observed on either side. As an instance of how the Boers regarded them, it may be mentioned that in September, 1901, Christian De Wet raised 3,000 burghers by mobilising and arming all those who had taken the oath of neutrality. Certain grievances were, of course, quoted as a justification for this act.

After a march of five miles the column halted at Wessel's farm. Here a Cape cart was stopped, and information obtained that the enemy were laagered at Noitgedacht farm, near the Vet River, about a day's march further on. This intelligence was confirmed later by some Kaffirs.

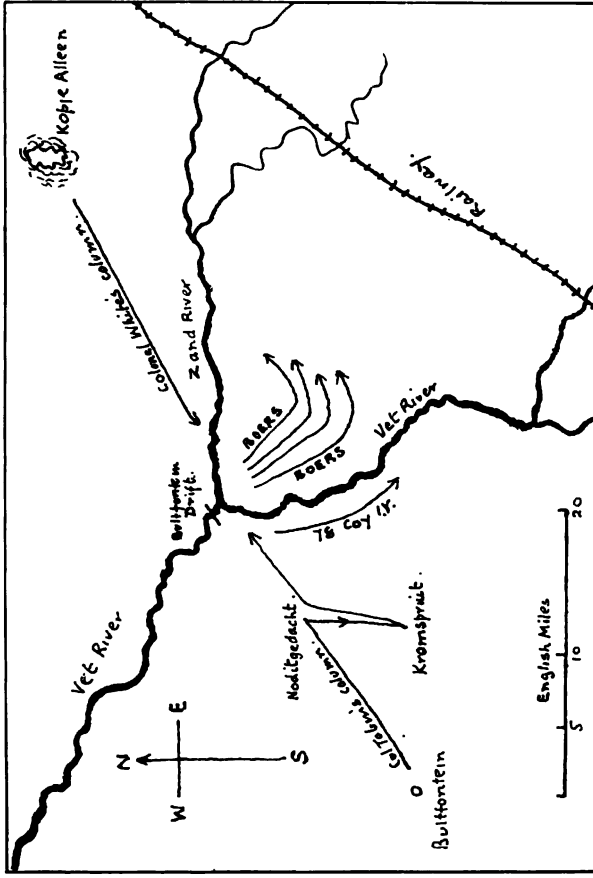
On the 26th the column left Wessel's farm at 8 a.m., after standing to arms at 4 o'clock, until daylight appeared. As the advance guard approached the farm where the Boers were hiding, four men were seen to gallop off from the place, and became quickly lost to view. The advance guard descended upon the homestead, and was soon followed by the main body, but the place was found to be deserted. Some live stock, however, were left, of which the farm was quickly cleared, and the column took up its quarters there for the night. A reconnoitring patrol was sent out under Lieutenant Moore. They reached the fringe of trees which border the Vet River, and were then heavily fired on by the Boers, who were ensconced in the river bank. Fortunately, the patrol was very widely extended, and had proceeded with great caution to the river bank, otherwise they would probably have been ambushed and cut off. As it was they had a sharp little brush with the enemy, and were then forced to retire, as the burghers came

out from their hiding place and chased them back, firing from their horses for some distance.

The following morning the column stood to arms as usual, and then marched west, after burning the little farm. In order to mislead the Boers, part of 78th Company, under Captain Bonham, rode N.E. for three hours, and then turned about and rejoined the column. The Yeomanry succeeded in locating the Boers again, but there was no firing. In the afternoon the whole column halted at a farm called Kromspruit. As a troop of 78th Company, forming the advance guard, was approaching this farm, a shot was heard in the vicinity, and six men were reported to have ridden away from the place. All the available mounted men were at once collected and galloped to the homestead, but nothing was found there.

As the enemy had been located at the junction of the Vet and Zand rivers, it was now necessary to obtain communication with Colonel White's column, which was encamped at Kopje Aleen, across the Vet. A party consisting of ten men of 78th Company, under Lieutenant Rew, some mounted gunners, and a few of the Royal Irish Rifles in Cape carts, under Captain Sitwell, the Adjutant of the Rifles, was sent a distance of about five miles to obtain heliographic communication, if possible. They were successful in this, but on the return journey several nasty falls occurred, as the country was honey-combed with meir-kat holes. The party had to walk their horses all the way back, and darkness overtaking them, they had great difficulty in locating the camp. The country generally was so flat that there were no landmarks of any kind to guide them.

The troops stood to arms at 4 a.m. on the following morning, the 28th, but no move was made all day.



PLAN OF THE ACTION AT THE JUNCTION OF THE VET AND ZAND RIVERS.
By the Author.



The object in coming on to Kromspruit had been to mislead the Boers and throw them off the scent, as it was now intended to return to Noitgedacht, the farm which was burnt on the previous day. As soon as darkness fell a night march was commenced at 6.30. The mounted men became separated from the main body during the journey, owing to the blackness of the night, but the whole column arrived safely at the rendezvous at Noitgedacht shortly before midnight.

At 4 a.m. next morning, September 29th, the men, as usual, stood to arms. Nothing happened, however, so, after an early breakfast, the column set off at 7 o'clock for the junction of the two rivers where the Boers were located. White's column advanced on the same point from the North, and both columns came upon the enemy at a farm situated in the angle formed by the two rivers. The ruse so far had been quite successful in finding the Boers utterly unprepared. Unfortunately, however, there had been some bungling, and both columns now found themselves with a river dividing them from their prey. Consequently, when they had recovered from their surprise, the Boers quickly mounted and galloped off between the columns, notwithstanding a heavy fire from the guns of both forces, which fell with great precision amidst the flying horsemen, sending up huge pillars of red sand, and enveloping the Dutchmen in clouds of dust. They retired E., then turned N.E. towards the Zand River. 78th Company pursued along the bank of the Vet river, trying to head them off, but was not able to inflict much damage, but they brought in over 100 horses and cattle. One Boer was discovered hiding in a cupboard at the farm, and three others were also captured. A few horses and a quantity of kit were taken in the laager. Among the horses was found one belonging to 78th Company, which had been previously captured

by the Boers with the wagons and kit from Bultfontein. One man of Colonel White's Column was wounded, but the enemy did very little firing, and must have considered themselves exceedingly lucky to get away with such small loss.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER this somewhat disappointing attack on the Boers, the two columns bivouacked together, and formed one force under Colonel White, as Colonel Tobin was taken ill, and had to be placed in the ambulance wagon.

The following morning, September 30th, at 6 a.m., the united force set off again on the trek to Smalldeel, with the object of entraining there for Springfontein. News had been received that there was trouble in the S.E. of the Orange River Colony, and the column had urgent orders to proceed to Springfontein with all despatch. As the two columns were now joined together, 78th Company formed part of the composite regiment of Yeomanry under Colonel Forbes, the other three squadrons being the 29th (Denbighshire), the 30th (Pembrokeshire), and the 31st and 49th (Montgomeryshire). There were also two guns of the 76th Battery Royal Field Artillery, and some more Companies of the Royal Irish Rifles.

A halt was made at Kalkfontein for the night, and the next day Smalldeel was reached. Here the force bivouacked round the station preparatory to entraining for Springfontein.

Early next morning, October 2nd, the Infantry and guns were despatched as expeditiously as possible; all the men laboured to load up the transport on the trucks, and the last of the column was off before nightfall. Travelling all through the night, Springfontein was

reached at dawn. Here no time was lost, and the men quickly unloaded the horses, saddled up, and were off by 6 o'clock, after having hastily drunk some hot coffee, which had been prepared for them. There was urgent need for the column to reach Smithfield—some 50 miles to the west—with as little delay as possible, as that place was threatened by a Boer commando. After a long forced march Klein Bloemfontein was reached that evening at 8 p.m. During the latter stages of the journey the whole column, baggage included, moved at a trot, and men and beasts were very tired when they arrived in camp. Leaving Klein Bloemfontein at 6 a.m. next morning, October 4th, another forced march brought the column to Smithfield at 6.15, thus having done the whole distance of 53 miles in two days. The latter part of the second day's journey, across bare veldt covered with rocky kopjes, was most fatiguing, and when at last the spire of Smithfield Church was spied, in the midst of some green trees, general relief was felt throughout the column. As the troops entered the town the inhabitants gave them an enthusiastic welcome. The column rested at Smithfield, as far as sandstorms permitted any rest at all, either to man or horse. These plagues of dust and sand had already been experienced to some extent at Maitland, but here they were much worse than ever had been felt before. The sand pervaded everything, food, drink, and the very air one breathed.

On Sunday, Oct. 7th, the mounted men and guns of Colonel White's column set off again to attack a Boer laager some sixteen miles distant. Lieutenant Moore was sent the same day with a party of fifteen men to escort a convoy and six prisoners to Bethulie. The force in search of the laager halted at 4.30 in order to finish the rest of the march under cover of night. Fires had just been lighted to boil water for the tea when some

scouts came in with information that a party of thirty Boers had just galloped off from a neighbouring farm. The order "saddle up at once," was immediately given, and the struggling fires of damp wood and cow dung and the half boiling pots had to be left. Saddles were flung on the horses, and the men were quickly ready. "As you were," was then shouted down the line, and the order was cancelled. It had been decided not to tire out the Yeomanry in running after a few burghers. These few burghers were, however, most probably an outpost of the laager sought for, and it was, therefore, highly probable that now nothing would be found on the next day.

The column resumed its march after dark, and bivouacked at Strydfontein, throwing out parties to occupy neighbouring farms. Several squadrons and troops were told to ride forward and occupy certain "black patches," which were supposed to be houses, but these turned out for the most part to be trees, pools of water, or rising ground. The men, therefore, not wishing to return to camp without having effected something, rode on to the next "black patch," and as very few of these turned out to be buildings at all, the different parties of horsemen vied with each other for the possession of those which really did exist. One troop finding that the farm they were making for was already occupied thought that they had discovered Boers, and very nearly fired on their own comrades.

Early next morning the little parties returned from their various posts, and the whole force formed up as quickly as possible, and trotted steadily for three hours to the Boer laager, only to find on reaching it that the place was deserted, and the Boers gone. Later on in the day a few prisoners were captured on some farms, and the column halted for the night at Hauns Post.

Next morning, October 9th, the force marched N.W. towards Helvetia. A troop of 78th Company, under Lieutenant Rew, with a Reddersburg policeman and some native guides, escorted the intelligence officer (a Mr. Grey) with wagons and carts on the left flank of the main body. This party soon left the column and captured a couple of Boers in a Cape cart. Further on, another Dutchman was taken and another Cape cart. With these prisoners and extra carts, Rew's party now came upon a very large farm with many outhouses, wagons, Cape carts, and much forage and grain. As the small force, with sentries posted all round to prevent surprise, stood bartering for forage, they were suddenly surrounded by the remainder of their own Squadron under Captain Bonham and Lieutenant Lord Zouche, followed by Colonel Forbes at the head of all the Yeomanry! These had naturally mistaken Rew's party, augmented by the prisoners and carts, for a body of Boers galloping back to their farm. When they found out their mistake, ample forage was obtained for the horses, and all the officers sat down to a very welcome spread of fried eggs, coffee, and cakes, which had already been laid out for the Boers in the best room, on a spotless white cloth. The column then resumed its march to Helvetia, which was reached at about 5 p.m. without any further incident. From Helvetia, which is a little place near Wepner, the column marched back again to Smithfield, 78th Company forming the advance guard. During the march Boers were reported to be in the rear of the column. The wagons were, therefore, sent on, and 78th Company was recalled from the advance guard, and with a gun and the rest of the Yeomanry, took up a position in order to ambush the Boers when they came along. The latter, however, were not to be caught so easily, for, although this change in tactics had been carried out as quietly as possible, the Boers must have become aware of it, for they did not

advance any further. A few of them were seen moving about the entrance to the trap, so Colonel Forbes, with his Welsh Yeomen, sallied forth to attack them. The Boers at once retired, and the Yeomen pursued them. Seeing this, the Boers loosed their led horses, which bolted in one direction while they galloped off in another, and all escaped.

After a long and tiring march in the dark the troops filed through a very uninviting and forbidding looking pass, which a few men could have held against an army, and arrived at Smithfield about 8 p.m. Here Lieutenant Moore and his party of fifteen men rejoined 78th Company. He had successfully accomplished his journey and taken the convoy safely to Bethulie. Directly it left this place, however, under a new escort, it fell into the hands of the Boers.

Colonel White's column encamped outside Smithfield, and thought that they would obtain a few days' rest, which was very badly needed both for men and horses. This was not to be, for news came that the railway had been wrecked by the Boers at Bethulie, and a Militia picquet smashed up there, and so the column had to start off again at 2 pm. next day, October 11th.

Tired as the men were the order to saddle up came as a welcome relief, for the sandstorms at Smithfield were so very excessive that it was impossible to obtain rest of any kind, and to take one's food with any degree of comfort was out of the question. Fine, gritty sand got into one's eyes, mouth, ears, everywhere. Food and drink were thick with it. No one who has experienced these dust storms at Smithfield is ever likely to forget them. The reason why they are so particularly bad here may be that the town is surrounded by hills on three sides, and the wind sweeps down the valleys which converge on the town, bringing all the dust and sand along with it.

The column marched on until night fell, when they halted at Van Zyls farm. In the darkness there was a great deal of confusion, and a regular medley of horses and men, wagons and carts. Everything was chaos for a while, but finally order was restored, and all settled down peacefully for the night.

In the morning the column left the farm at 5.30, with 78th Company as the advance guard. Very soon 400 Boers were reported to be on the right flank. 78th Company was, therefore, recalled from the front, and sent off with the rest of the Yeomanry to locate the enemy. The report, however, proved to have come too late, for when various farms were visited nothing was found but the tracks of Boers who had recently been there. At the farm where the Boer commando had halted the owner was taken prisoner, as Lord Roberts had recently issued a proclamation ordering all who had taken the oath of neutrality to report to the British if any Boer scout or commando should come to their farm, and threatening them with punishment if they failed to do so.

Night fell before the Yeomanry were able to rejoin the column, and, indeed, they were lucky in finding it at all. In the darkness many of the clumsy foreign horses began to stumble about, and fall over the holes and rough ground. One man of the R.A.M.C. had a very severe fall, which delayed the rearguard for some time. However, all met together again at Slinkspruit, where the column bivouacked for the night.

Leaving the farm at 6 a.m. next morning the column crawled away on its last day's journey to Bethulie. The Yeomanry did not leave until an hour later, and then returned to the farm visited on the previous day in order to burn it. It was a pretty little homestead, situated in the midst of some shady trees in

a hollow through which a small spruit ran. It looked a very pleasant haven of rest after the sun scorched veldt. The inmates were allowed to take anything they liked out of the house, and a small building was reserved for the use of the women and children, of whom there were about six. The farm and all the rest of the buildings, wagons, carts, etc., were then set fire to, and blazed up freely before the Yeomanry left to rejoin their companions. Hurrying forward, they quickly overtook the infantry and wagons, and Bethulie was reached at 2 p.m. in the midst of another severe dust-storm. Bethulie was garrisoned by the 4th Battalion Cheshire Regiment, commanded by Colonel C. H. Beck. The troops halted for two days, taking a little well deserved rest, and having as many of the horses re-shod as possible. The halt would have been longer, but trouble broke out at Rouxville, and it was necessary for the column to set off again in order to relieve the place.

The column started at 6 a.m. on October 16th, and only the fittest horses were taken. 32 horses belonging to 78th Company and 21 men, under Lieutenant Rew, were left behind. The force bivouacked at Van Zyle's farm, and next day Smithfield was entered for the third time, everything being, of course, enveloped in dust and sand, as usual. Leaving Smithfield early in the morning, a halt was called at Coomassie Bridge, in order that the men might be quite fresh for going on to Rouxville. That place was reached on the following day, and as the column approached it, a troop of Yeomanry under Lord Zouche was sent forward "to take the town." There was no opposition, however, and the inhabitants gladly welcomed the troops, while a grateful storekeeper supplied them with coffee. A few mounted men were seen decamping as the Yeomanry galloped in, but the main body of the Boers had left the place some days previously.

Rouxville is a very small town, consisting of some houses and stores near the borders of Basutoland. Leaving a small garrison with Major Rundle, Royal Field Artillery, as Commandant, the column left again next morning, and marching by way of Wildebestlaagte and Reitport, arrived back at the little border town of Bethulie on October 22nd.

As the column got into the town, an alarm was raised that they were being attacked by Boers. This was caused by a patrol of the Cheshire Regiment firing on some of the men of the column by mistake. The alarm became general, and the inhabitants ran in all directions, intent on saving what they could of their property. The town mounted police, by their ludicrous air of importance and frenzied galloping about in all directions, drew forth some caustic remarks from the Yeomanry, who stood coolly to arms at their posts.

Bethulie was well fortified against attack. The shops were loop-holed, and the windows and doors filled with sandbags. The guns now came galloping in, and the men of 78th Company, who were left behind when the column trekked to Bethulie, were sent to the outskirts of the town when the alarm sounded. Here they manned a wall and remained for several weary hours under the scorching rays of a South African sun until they began to wish that the Boers would really make their appearance, and so create a diversion. No attack was made, but news arrived that the little town of Phillippolis was being besieged, and an urgent order came for the column to march at once to its relief.

All the horses and men that were fit to go were, therefore, collected, and a start was made at 5 p.m. The night was very black, and in the darkness the guns and their escort became separated from the main body, and had great difficulty in finding it again. After an anxious

time they fortunately struck the railway, and then by following the rails to the right they soon found the main body again, and all halted for a few hours' rest at Priors Siding at about 3 a.m.

After this short rest the column pushed on steadily again, and soon came into contact with parties of the enemy. On nearing Phillipolis the guns and wagons were halted in a narrow, rocky gorge, while the mounted men, after making the head of the pass secure, went on to clear the way to the town. It was now getting towards evening, and the Yeomanry, numbering about 150, galloped the last six or seven miles. Then, without pausing, they dashed into the town, driving the Boers out before them, and thus bringing to an end the close siege of fifteen days.

The inhabitants were naturally overjoyed at the relief, and received them enthusiastically, and could not do enough for the Yeomanry. The plucky little garrison consisted of only 25 Englishmen (police, town guard, and others), with seven natives, making thirty-two in all. They had retired to the top of a small rocky kopje, at the rear of the George Hotel, and having roughly fortified the top with stones and sandbags, had succeeded in holding out for over a fortnight against overwhelming numbers of the enemy. They were able to obtain water from a spring about 500 yards behind the kopje, the Kaffirs very gallantly going down for it at night. The Boers do not seem to have known of or interfered with this source of supply.

The enemy occupied the streets and houses in the town, and from these kept up a continual fire on the garrison. The flag, which was kept flying throughout the siege, was riddled by shot and torn to shreds. The Boers seemed to have taken a particular pleasure in shooting at it. Very little of it was left at the end of

the fifteen days, but they never succeeded in shooting it down. The casualties amongst the defenders were two or three killed and six wounded. The two hundred burghers had picketed their horses to the trees, which formed an avenue down the main street, and many useful steeds now fell into the hands of the Yeomanry. In their hurried flight the Boers had also left much behind them in their laager, which was just outside the town. Here were found more horses, saddles, rifles, ammunition, field glasses, and some swords and accoutrements belonging to the Household and other Cavalry. A number of Cavalry details (including two officers) who had been sent to the relief of the town, but had been captured by the Boers, were also found, and speedily released. The story they told was a simple one. A mixed force of forty-five Cavalry details had been sent under officers they were unacquainted with, without guides, to accomplish a very arduous task in a country they did not know. On making enquiries at a farm, they were directed to the farm where the Boers were laagered. They, therefore, went thither, and all of them, except six, were captured.

The Yeomanry now set about making the captured town secure. The outposts were furnished by 78th Company. One picquet was posted on the fortified hill around which lay many dead animals which had been killed during the fighting, and which contaminated the atmosphere to no small extent.

The Boers had not retired far. Two runners were sent out to convey the news to Colonel White, who was with the main body some miles away, but these were shot at, and failed to get through, so had to return to Phillipolis. Then one of the police tried, but was fired at half a mile out, and compelled to return. Later on, another man made an attempt; he, too, was fired on and

shot through the hat. So he also had to give it up.

A very anxious night was passed, and a lot of stumbling about and falling over rocks took place among the outposts in the rocky outskirts of the town. Tomkins, the Chief of the Police, had a very heavy spill down the side of the kopje he had so long and so ably defended.

Next morning Colonel White, with the remainder of the column arrived at Phillipolis, and another column, under Colonel Barker, also marched in from the opposite side of the town. It consisted of the 46th and 54th (Belfast) Companies of Imperial Yeomanry, some Seaforth Highlanders, and two guns of the 43rd Battery Royal Field Artillery.

Two civilians had been killed in the fort, and their funeral now took place with full military honours. Rough, but neat, black coffins were knocked together, and flowers and wreaths procured as a last tribute to these brave men. All the troops were formed up on parade, and saluted the procession as it passed down the ranks. The coffins were carried by the defenders of the hill, one of these, who had been shot in the arm, being bandaged up. The troops then fell in behind, and marched to the Cemetery. The service was conducted by Colonel Barker, and when the ceremony was over the usual three volleys were fired by a firing party of the Royal Irish Rifles. After each volley a general salute was blown by the buglers of 78th Company, and after the last volley the "Last Post" rang out clear and plaintive, echoing back from the rockbound kopje, which the poor fellows had died in defending.

In the afternoon, at 4.30 p.m., the Yeomanry were formed up in hollow square, and Colonel White addressed them in words of praise for the hard work they had done, and which had ended in the relief of the town.

CHAPTER VII.

THE troops now enjoyed a couple of days' rest at Phillipolis, which they badly needed. They had been on the march for six weeks without a change of anything. A wash had been rare and a bath impossible during all this time. The want of sleep and proper food had left traces on the men's faces, and as they went about in dirty, ragged clothes, with beards of six weeks' growth, they could hardly be recognised, even by their best friends. They were still on half rations, but changes of clothes were obtained from the shops, and a general wash-up took place. The horses, too, had a good rest, and were re-shod as far as possible. After a two days' stay at Phillipolis, orders were received that the two columns were to evacuate the place, and march to Springfontein. All ranks were very sorry and rather angry at this decision. Tomkins and those who had defended the town so bravely, were also very much chagrined to hear of this evacuation.

The work of packing up at once commenced, and wagons and vehicles of all descriptions were quickly loaded up by the inhabitants, assisted by many little children in bright summer dress. Finally all, arrayed in their gayest and best, seated themselves in the wagons amongst the small amount of property which they were allowed to bring with them. Meanwhile, the Yeomanry attended to their horses, the infantry assisted with the wagons, and the two columns started off at 6 a.m., and after a long day's march reached Springfontein at 4.30

p.m. On the way Captain Bonham was ordered to arrest some Boers at a farm and burn the place. This he accordingly did, smashed the place up, tore up the floors and lighted a bonfire in every room, when another order was received to "put it out." This was accomplished with considerable difficulty.

That night the column bivouacked near the railway. A heavy rain saturated the ground well before the kits arrived in the slow ox wagons, and so the men had to wrap themselves up in wet blankets and lie on the sodden ground, which was rather poor comfort after a twenty-six mile march. Several explosions were heard during the night, and in the morning it was found that the railway line had been destroyed in two places. This was repaired in a few hours, but it proved that the Boers were in the near neighbourhood.

Springfontein had largely increased from a military point of view since the last visit of the column. There were now huge stacks of supplies by the railway, and a large, and unhappily very full, hospital had been built. Many Boers were around the town, and sniping was incessant. An officer and a sergeant had quite recently been shot.

As the day was Sunday, Church parade was announced for 3 o'clock, in the absence of any marching orders which had been expected early in the day. At 12.30, however, an order came to be off in half an hour. 78th Company formed the advance guard, and Colonel White was well up in the front. He sent several patrols of the Company forward to reconnoitre some farms which lay under a long ridge about four miles out on the Smithfield road. The ridge was found to be well posted with Boer riflemen, who opened a very sharp fire on the patrols and advance guard. Colonel White's horse was killed, and several others fell. There was no cover of

any kind except a few ant hills, and from their meagre shelter 78th Company returned the enemy's fire. So few Yeomen could not, of course, hope to drive the Boers out of such a strong position, but soon the guns came galloping up, and began to shell the enemy, setting the hills on fire. The infantry then crept up and took the kopje, but found that the Boers had bolted. Jumping on their horses, 78th Company then galloped after the flying enemy, but did not succeed in capturing any of them. In this little brush 78th Company lost three men wounded, viz., Corporal Sprunt (dangerously), and Troopers Morgan (severely), and Duncan, the last-named being hit in the back and arm as he lay flat in the saddle. Four horses were killed, including Colonel White's, and several were wounded. The wounded men were sent back to Springfontein, and the column bivouacked at a farm at Von Asverkers Poorte. Colonel Forbes paraded 78th Company here, and complimented them upon their behaviour under fire.

The following morning, October 29th, the column, after having burnt the farm, marched on to Jargersfontein Road, where they halted for a day. Major Cropper was sent out with fifty Yeomanry, including a party of 78th Company, under Lieutenant Rew, to burn a farm where an officer of the Northumberland Fusiliers Mounted Infantry had recently been killed. This officer had ridden up to the farm to make enquiries, and when riding away from it his party had been treacherously fired on, and he himself mortally wounded.

On reaching the farm the women and children were, as usual, allowed an hour in which to save anything that they liked. It was a remarkable and unhappy fact that in an emergency of this kind the Boer men seldom showed themselves ready and willing to help the women. For instance, in this case the man sat and looked on



FUEL.



quite indifferent to the sufferings of his family. The Yeomanry helped to bring some of the furniture out of the farm, and when the work was done and the place set fire to, these women and children were left sitting on the veldt enveloped in the smoke of their blazing home. It was a painful duty to have to perform, and most distasteful to all who were ordered to do it. Yet, of course, it was absolutely necessary that these people should be punished for the treacherous death which had taken place at their door.

Next morning, October 31st, the march towards Edenburg was resumed, and Cypherskuid, which is about half way, was reached late in the afternoon. The day had been a trying one, especially for the infantry, as the sun was intensely hot, and there was no shelter to be had. The following day was much better, as the column left at 5.30 a.m., reaching Edenburg at 10.30, before the great heat began. Here several men who had been in hospital rejoined the Company.

At this time separate parts of the country had been allotted to different Boer commandos, who, for the most part, kept to their own districts. The country round Reddersburg had been assigned to Commandant Piet Fourie.

An effort was now to be made by Colonel Barker's Yeomanry, acting in conjunction with Colonel White's mounted force, to dislodge this commando, and capture it, if possible.

After a day's rest at Edenburg, a flying column of Yeomanry, including 78th Company and a pompom, set off on November 2nd, under the command of Colonel Forbes, to round up some farms, and try to catch some Boers who were known to be in the neighbourhood of Reddersburg. This force marched north as far as

Bethany, and then turned east towards Reddersburg, and halted after dark on a suspected farm (Tweefontein). No lights were allowed. All the horses were turned loose into one kraal for the night, and the men lay down around it.

Not having found any Boers here, the force started off again in a drizzling rain soon after dawn on Nov. 3rd, and continued the search for Fourie. Lieutenant Lord Zouche, with a few men, made a slight detour to visit a farm, where he captured two or three prisoners, and brought them back with him. During the morning, while 78th Company were temporarily separated from the rest of the force, they suddenly became aware of the advance of an armed force. A gun was hastily brought up, and preparations made to meet the enemy. The newcomers, however, turned out to be some Irish Yeomanry from Colonel Barker's column, who brought news of the whereabouts of the Boer commando. Without any delay, therefore, the two parties joined forces, and hastened off to round them up.

78th Company was sent out on the left flank, and were widely extended over a very rough and undulating country. Presently, the enemy was located on the right, and the main body wheeled round and bore down on them, so that 78th Company found itself detached by this sudden and unexpected movement. Guided by the sound of the firing, they galloped off to the scene of action, where they found the remainder of the force on a plateau engaged with the Boers, who were retiring from some farms in a hollow, under cover of a pompom and some sharp-shooters on a ridge above. One troop of 78th Company came up just in time to assist in checking a pretty little movement. Some venturesome Boers, under cover of a spruit which ran round the plateau, had managed to slip round unobserved to the

rear, and now began to attack the force from that side. A sharp volley was poured into them by the Irish Yeomanry, which evidently had the desired effect, for soon this daring party began to withdraw, and eventually worked their way round to the main body of Boers, who were retiring in the direction of Dewetsdorp. Colonel Forbes now ordered 78th Company to gallop at the retreating enemy. With shells from the guns of the column whistling and shrieking overhead, the Company gave chase at full gallop. The Boers quickly cleared for all they were worth. Some desultory firing took place, but the range was too great, and the next order brought the Company back again. All had thoroughly enjoyed the wild ride, and said afterwards that nothing could have been more exhilarating. The action lasted from noon until 4.30. In Colonel Barker's column, Captain Stannus and seven men of the Irish I.Y. were wounded, and eleven horses killed. The pompom jammed and lost three horses, and Captain Montgomery was hit in three places at 700 yards. Some of 78th Company had very narrow escapes.

The engagement had been fought on the enemy's side with their usual tactics, which may be explained here, as actions of this kind were common in the history of the Battalion. As soon as ever their scouts brought in information that the British were in the neighbourhood, the main body would begin to retire, leaving behind a picked rearguard of sharpshooters, as well as the patrols, and, if possible, a gun. These always occupied the strongest position available, usually on some rocky kopje, out of which it was almost impossible to dislodge them. Shells might be hurled against them until the hills were literally alive with the bursting missiles, and yet in spite of everything the derisive pip-pop of the rifles would continue.

The name of the farm where this action took place was Carse O'Gourie. When the Boers had finally been driven off, the force marched to Reddersburg, where Colonel White's main body, with all the baggage and supplies, had proceeded on the previous day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Column rested at Reddersburg on Sunday, November 4th. It was an uninteresting little town of the usual Boer type, but now, with the main streets full of armed men, it presented a gay and lively appearance. 78th Company were comfortably lodged in the village schoolhouse, while the horses occupied the play yard.

Fourie's commando was still in the neighbourhood, so at 6.30 a.m. on Monday morning, November 5th, the whole force set off again to make another attempt to capture it. The infantry rode in wagons. Soon after passing the Bulberg, which is a large isolated kopje a few miles from Reddersburg, the Boer Commandant was located with a force of about seven hundred burghers and a pompom.

78th Company was sent out on the left flank to support that part of the advance guard. Some shots were exchanged with a Boer patrol, who afterwards retired. After following the Boers for some distance, the Company wheeled to the right with the intention of re-joining the column. They found, however, that they were surrounded by rifle and gun fire on three sides. A sharp fight was now in progress, and as both sides were doing their best to keep from being seen, it was exceedingly difficult to know which way to turn. This point was, however, decided for them by a shower of pom-pom shells, which fell in close proximity to the rear of the Company, followed immediately by another,

better aimed, which burst in the midst of the squadron. The air was thick with dust, and flashes of fire and the whizz of bullets followed the explosion of the shells. Fortunately, no one was hit, as the men were well extended. The horses were much alarmed, but the squadron managed to hold together somehow, and bearing to the right, made for a ridge, up which they advanced.

Here 78th Company had another very lucky escape, for it turned out that this ridge was lined with the Royal Irish Rifles who, lying in extended order, were quite indiscernible until the Yeomanry were within a few yards of them. These Rifles, seeing horsemen galloping up from the distant flanks, naturally mistook them for Boers, and were just about to pour a volley into them when, fortunately, some pom-pom shells fired at the Yeomanry by the Boers, disclosed who they were. It was a very near thing, as the men had actually got to the "present," and if the volley had been fired, doubtless most of the saddles would have been emptied at such close range. 78th Company now joined the pom-pom, which was firing from the open. The Boers had attempted to rush this gun, and taking advantage of a donga, crept up to within a few hundred yards of it, but the defence was too warm for them, and they were forced to retire to the top of a long crescent shaped kopje. Captain Bonham was despatched with 78th Company to cut off their retreat. After galloping across the open veldt under fire, the Company succeeded in taking up a good position in a donga. This was fortunate, as the enemy held a very strong position, and quickly found the range. A message was despatched to the main column for support, and the Yeomen held the position for an hour. Then finding that the enemy's attention was drawn towards the main body, the Company emerged from the donga to rejoin



78TH COMPANY "HELD UP" IN A DONGA, NOV. 5, 1900.



the column. As they came out in single file, the Boers picked up the range to a nicety and bullets fell fast. The whole Company, however, escaped with extraordinary luck, only losing one horse killed and three wounded. Before the end of this eventful day Lieut. Moore had a very narrow escape. While he was riding up to a farm which was flying the white flag he was fired on at short range by a party of Boers, who were hidden behind a stone wall. These Boers, however, had no connection with the people in the farm, but had simply taken cover there during the fighting. At sunset the whole column bivouacked at Schanskopjes, after burning a farm where Boers had been found. As the troops filed by this ruined homestead, the infuriated vrouw stood by shaking her fist at them. Although the column had met with such severe opposition very little damage was done. Only one man, a Welsh Yeoman, had been wounded. The guns had been splintered by shot and shell, while several horses were killed and many were very badly wounded.

It is a most extraordinary thing that a hot engagement like this, lasting all day, can be fought with modern guns belching forth destruction continually, and yet without the loss of a single man. While so many escapes occurred on a day like this, on the other hand many a poor fellow lost his life by a mere casual shot fired at random! As Fourie's commando had now made themselves scarce, the column set off next morning, Nov. 6th, at 7.30, to march to Bloemfontein, keeping parallel with the railway line. 78th Company formed the rear-guard. After a march of ten miles the column halted for the day at Eerste Geluke (First Luck), a pretty little farm amidst some shady trees besides a clear stream. It looked very fresh and pleasant, but 78th Company was ordered to remain out on the hills, under a burning sun, until late in the afternoon.

Next day a troop of 78th Company, under Lieutenant Lord Zouche, formed part of a foraging expedition among the farms in the district. They only succeeded in bringing in about a wagon load, as many of the farms in the district were found to be absolutely empty.

At 5 a.m. on the 8th, the march to Bloemfontein was continued, 78th Company forming the advance guard. The day was hot and sultry, and the pace exceedingly slow. There were frequent halts, and the monotony of the trek, combined with the heat of the day, caused a feeling of great drowsiness amongst both horses and men. One of the advance guard fell asleep during a halt, and was discovered a mile behind the others, slumbering peacefully, with his horse standing motionless beside him!

A long halt on the barren and sun scorched kopjes within full view of Bloemfontein, with its comparative coolness and shade was most tantalising. On this occasion Bloemfontein did not prove very inviting, for as the column at last approached the "Rest Camp," which was pitched on a plain outside the town, a blinding dust storm arose, accompanied with very heavy thunder. Amidst deafening peals of thunder and vivid flashes of lightning, great pillars of red sand that dwarfed the hills could be seen advancing across the plain. The torrents of rain had no effect in checking the sand, and both beat mercilessly upon the tired and jaded troops. It was impossible to distinguish one's neighbour, so the result of an order to trot under these conditions baffles description. The ranks became hopelessly mixed up, while kit and accoutrement fell or were torn off from man and horse, and the ground passed over was plentifully strewn with miscellaneous articles.

Although the Company had been on the outskirts of the town since mid-day, they did not get into their tents

until five o'clock, and even then these proved worse than useless. Trooper Cloke now rejoined the Company. He had been left behind at Bloemfontein, and was wounded in a reconnaissance from that town, when the Commissioner, Lieutenant Thomas, Ceylon Mounted Infantry, was killed, and Lieutenant Slater wounded. The latter recovered from his wound, but unfortunately died a few months later from enteric, having paid a visit to 78th Company a few weeks before his death.

CHAPTER IX.

ON Sunday, November 11th, 78th Company finally separated from Colonel White's column, and became stationary once more. The following is a copy of the order:—

COLONEL WHITE,—

Captain Bonham's Company of Yeomanry will be detached from you, and will move to-morrow morning to Floradale to watch Pretorius Drift and Kruidfontein Drift, on the Modder River. Please give the necessary information.

By Order.

W. S. KINCAID, Lieut.-Colonel,
C.S.O.

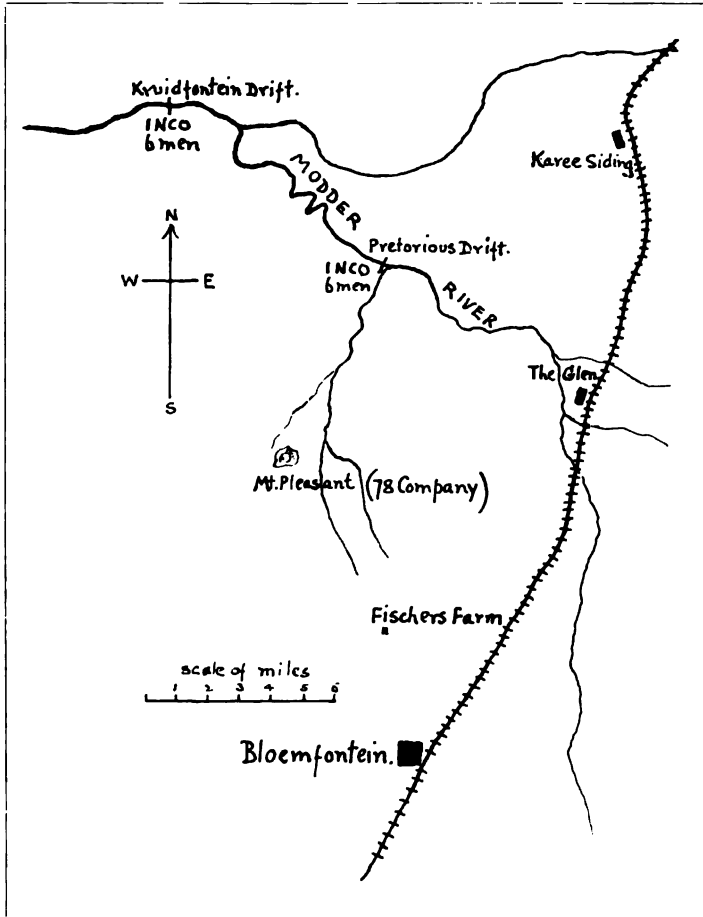
Bloemfontein, Nov. 10th, 1900.

O.C. 78 Company I.Y.,—

Forwarded for your information. I should like you to march at 7.30 a.m.

G. W. FORBES, Lieut.-Colonel,
Bloemfontein, Nov. 10th, 1900.

The position they now took up was among some old horse kraals at the foot of Mount Pleasant, which is an isolated kopje, about eighty feet high and about 12 miles N.W. of Bloemfontein. There were none of the comforts of a standing camp here. The men had to make themselves the best shelters they could out of blankets, empty corn sacks, spare bales of forage, stones, biscuit tins, etc., put together with the aid of a rifle,



By the Author.

PLAN OF 78TH COMPANY'S POSITION AT MOUNT PLEASANT.

bayonet, and bridle. From this centre, picquets, consisting of one non-commissioned officer and six men, had to be posted day and night at Kruidfontein Drift and at Pretorious Drift on the Modder River. The first of these was twelve miles, and the latter seven, from the Company's Headquarters.

Before leaving Bloemfontein information had been received from the Intelligence Department that the Modder River had risen two feet. It was found, however, only to contain a few pools of water, and the enemy could, indeed, cross the river at any point between these two above-mentioned posts, which were so many miles apart.

The weather was now exceedingly hot, and flies and insects of all kinds made the encampment most uncomfortable. After the constant change and excitement of the last weeks it was only natural that a complete re-action should set in now that the Company had become stationary again. Moreover, the posts were a long way out, water was at a distance of over two miles, and the rations were anything but adequate, and consisted only of bully beef and biscuits. Under all these circumstances, with no proper shelter, and insufficient food, small wonder that the men's health began to fail. Numbers of sick were taken every day into Bloemfontein, and within a week's time the strength of the Company was reduced to one-half.

At last, on November 20th, proper rations arrived. These consisted of nine live sheep, a number of loaves sufficient for the Company, and a sack of vegetables, all mixed up in one wagon! On November 21st, the usual contingent of sick men set off to Bloemfontein, but greatly to the amusement of the few who still remained well in camp, this cartload of "sick" returned in the evening with papers marked "medicine and duty!"

Nothing of much interest occurred until Sunday, November 25th, when just after Church parade, a terrific thunderstorm broke over the camp. It rained in torrents for nearly four hours. Hailstones as large as beans broke through the meagre shelters of blankets, sacks, and stones, while the water literally poured down the kopje, and washed everything completely out. There was nothing to do but stand up and face it, or else follow the example of the horses, who stood with their backs to it. The veldt all round quickly became flooded, and a depression in the vicinity was transformed into a huge lake. This natural dam was afterwards a boon to the farmers, and saved the Company a long march to water their horses. It was an exceptionally severe storm, even for South Africa, and seemed more like the bursting of a waterspout than anything else. Many forms of animal life and creeping things of all kinds sought refuge in the camp wherever there was a dry spot. With night came a report that the enemy were in close proximity, but the Company was in such a very sorry plight after the severe storm that nothing could be done. The troops stationed at the top of the kop had the best of it that night, as they found some fairly dry ground to sleep on. Next morning, November 26th, the enemy increased in numbers and activity, and the two isolated posts at Kruidfontein Drift and Pretorious Drift were in imminent danger of being cut off. When news had been received on the previous evening that the enemy was in the near neighbourhood, the more advanced post had been withdrawn and sent out again with reinforcements early in the morning, under Lieutenant Rew.

A Boer commando under Commandant George Brand, with guns, now advanced and crossed the Modder River at a point about midway between the two posts.

They then made straight for the picquet at Kruidfontein Drift.

During their twelve mile ride out in the early morning our picquet had seen a number of mounted men. On reaching the drift, therefore, they retired to a good position on a kopje, about a mile from the river. From this point they sent out patrols, who found very evident signs of the enemy, while a Kaffir came in who had been stopped by the Boers. Two men were seen galloping hard towards the camp, and proved to be two farmers, Coleman and Bridger, who were fleeing there for protection. A black scout then arrived from the Company's headquarters with an urgent message for the picquet to return at once to camp, as the Boers had already crossed the river, and intended to cut them off. The men immediately began to slip away singly, and at intervals, and, after making a wide detour, all succeeded in reaching camp safely. Shortly afterwards the Boers galloped up to the vacant post, and diligently searched among the Kaffir Kraals for the little party they had expected to capture. They were doubtless, much disappointed to find that the birds were flown!

It was a constant topic of conversation among these men at the river posts, that if only the authorities understood the country and the river, they would know that the enemy could cross almost anywhere, and that such small posts so many miles apart would be powerless to prevent it. Undoubtedly the picquets did good work, and gave much valuable information, but their numerical weakness, and their distance from the main body, made them a tempting bait for the enemy. They might have been attacked at any moment, and many an anxious night was spent. The only wonder is that the Boers did not come before.

A few days afterwards news reached the camp that Colonel White's column had an engagement with this commando, when several of the officers and men of the Welsh Imperial Yeomanry, with whom 78th Company had recently been trekking, were severely wounded. Major Cropper was shot in five places, and although he almost recovered, and was able to reach England, he unfortunately had a relapse, and died a short time afterwards. Lieutenant Mainwaring was dangerously wounded, and lay for some time in Bloemfontein hospital. Lieutenant Condor was also hit.

The strength of 78th Company was still diminishing, and on November 27th one troop consisted of only two non-commissioned officers and eight men, two of the latter being non-duty men.

On the 25th, a patrol under Lieutenant Rew, visited the post from which the picquet had escaped on the 26th. A Boer laager was reported to be in the neighbourhood, so with due caution the Yeomanry circled round the kop, and then galloped up to it. They found, however, that it was unoccupied. Presently a mounted man was spied making off in the distance. The Yeomanry promptly gave chase. They found themselves ludicrously sold, however, for on hunting him down, the "mounted man" turned out to be a Kaffir riding a cow! Fruitless chases of this kind constantly occurred, especially at times when numbers of Boers were known to be about.

One day a single horseman was seen on the opposite bank of the river, and while he descended into the drift in order to cross, some men were despatched to intercept him. As apparently, he never reached the other side search was made for him high and low. The river banks were carefully scouted up and down, but without avail. Finally, it was discovered that the mysterious horseman was one of 78th Company! He had been sent

on ahead, and was returning through the drift, when, noticing that his comrades were hunting for some one, he joined in the chase after himself!

During these patrols the Company found it very tantalising to be obliged to leave the farmers in possession of their horses, for, of course, they knew that use would be made of these against themselves. Orders, however, forbade their being brought in, though everyone saw that to deprive the Boer of his horse was the best blow that could be struck at him.

In the bush along the river were several gipsy-like encampments of Boer women. There is very little doubt that these women baked bread for the men on commando and in other ways assisted them. The farms near these rude dwelling places were deserted. In a room in one house, half hidden in the bush, a patrol found a little child, having for its only companions a brood of chickens and a lamb!

As the enemy were still very active in the neighbourhood, an order came during the night of November 29th for 78th Company to come in nearer to Bloemfontein for greater security, and take up their quarters at Fischer's farm. Accordingly, next morning, November 30th, the little wigwam shelters were all pulled down, and the Company marched in to their new headquarters. A post, however, was still left at Mount Pleasant.

CHAPTER X.

FISCHER'S Farm was about six miles from Bloemfontein, and took its name from the owner, who was at that time in Europe trying in vain to enlist the sympathies of other powers. The house was occupied by Captain Eassie, A.V.D., who commanded a large Remount Depot here. It was one of the prettiest places in the Orange River Colony, situated in the midst of beautiful flowers and shrubbery, through which rocky paths led up to the house. The Yeomanry camp here was a great improvement upon that at Mount Pleasant, as the Company were now provided with tents. This was a very welcome change, after the wretched shelters which the men had lately had. But there was one serious drawback to this camping ground, and that was an ever increasing pile of dead horses from the Remount camp, which was in close proximity to the Yeomanry lines. The noxious smell from the heap of dead bodies was most offensive, and was greatly aggravated when the wind blew from the direction of this charnel house.

Fischer's Farm was in the Bloemfontein line of outposts, and belonged to "A" section. There was a strong post of infantry half way to the town, composed of the 3rd Yorks Regiment, who were soon to be relieved by the Royal Irish Fusiliers. Although the Company was so much nearer Bloemfontein, the drifts on the Modder River, one of them being about eighteen miles distant, had still to be patrolled, and several posts all round had to be



78TH COMPANY'S BIVOUAC AT MOUNT PLEASANT

Vertical line on the right side of the page.

held both day and night. A new order had come out that all males over fourteen and under sixty years of age were to be brought in. These were sent in to the Bloemfontein Refugee Camp.

Another typical South African thunderstorm occurred on December 5th. A raincloud appeared to burst immediately overhead, deluging everything, while the terrific peals of thunder caused the horses to jump with fright. On December 6th the camp was inspected by Colonel Bethune, who commanded the troops in Bloemfontein, and the following day General Prettyman visited the post.

About this time the war took a very serious turn. De Wet and Steyn, after the memorable defeat at Bothaville by the gallant Le Gallais, crossed the Doorn river, marched S.E., broke through the Bloemfontein-Ladybrand line of outposts, and captured Dewetsdorp.

On December 20th a patrol of 78th Company was missing, and nothing could be heard of it for two days. It turned up safely, however, on the 22nd, having been unable to cross the river, which had suddenly risen considerably. Two Boer scouts were also unable to cross. They were reported to be at Prinsloo's Farm, but were left there unmolested. There was generally too much trouble taken and time wasted over small parties of the enemy, who were very hard to catch. The Boers frequently told off small patrols to attract the attention of the British, who often gave chase in considerable numbers, and fell into a well-planned ambush.

On December 24th, Christmas Eve, there was a football match between the Yeomanry and 3rd Yorks. M.I. Lieutenant Rew played for 76th Company, and Lieutenant Beamish for the Mounted Infantry. After an exciting game, the Yeomanry won by two goals to one.

On Christmas Day, Church Parade was held in the morning. Afterwards all enjoyed their Christmas dinner and plum puddings. These puddings had been made by the men, and then tied up in nosebags, and boiled in pails. Although this does not sound appetising, they were, nevertheless, excellent, and those who were on outpost duty had their share sent out to them. An allowance of beer to celebrate the occasion was made to all troops in the Bloemfontein command. In the evening a heliographic message apprised the Company of the safety of a hitherto missing patrol. Little anxiety had been felt on their behalf, as it was thought that they were spending their Christmas in some deserted farmhouse.

The New Year, 1901, began very quietly around Bloemfontein. The heat was intense, 140 degrees being registered in the sun, and 104 degrees in the shade. Although the Company now had tents, the health of the men did not appear to improve. Indeed, men fell sick at an alarming rate. Fortunately, the enteric cases were of a slight nature, and with good nursing at Bloemfontein Hospital, they soon recovered. Trooper Duncan, who was wounded near Springfontein in October, was among those who returned to duty on January 2nd.

On January 3rd, Lord Kitchener issued stringent orders with regard to outpost work, as several posts in other parts of the country had recently been captured. A proclamation stating that all Boers who surrendered would be taken with their families into the Refugee Camp, was also issued. On the 6th a patrol went out under Lieutenant Lord Zouche to visit the various farms and leave copies of this proclamation at each house.

On the following day, January 7th, the patrol of six men under Kruidfontein Drift was fired on by a party of seven Boers. Afterwards they had a skirmish with

some thirty of the enemy, but no harm was done. On the 9th it was decided to try and catch these Boers, who were perpetually giving trouble and molesting the Company's patrol at this place. Accordingly, at 10 p.m. a party of fifteen Yeomen, under Lieutenant Lord Zouche and ten 3rd Yorks M.I., under Lieutenant Beamish, paraded silently, and marched off noiselessly into the inky darkness of the night. Such extreme caution was not really necessary, as the drift was nearly twenty miles distant, but it showed how keen the men were to make the attempt a success. When this patrol reached their destination, Sergeant Bagshaw, with three men, were sent on ahead well across the river to "feel for the Boers," and try to draw them on, while the remainder of the men lay in ambush near the river. This "feeling for the Boers" is a trying and dangerous duty, but the little party performed it exceedingly well. They quickly located the Boers, advanced well within the fire zone, then withdrew, tempting the Boers to follow. This they did, and pursued the scouts hotly to within five hundred yards of the river. So far all had gone well, but unfortunately, the ambuscading party were not so successful, and allowed the Boers to escape after all, without capturing a man. The patrol consequently returned to camp next morning without any prisoners.

On January 12th six Yeomen belonging to the 15th, 57th, and 58th Companies I.Y., who had been taken prisoners on the north side of the river, were set free, and came into 78th Company's camp.

78th Company still continued to diminish in officers and men owing to illness. Captain Bonham was invalided home, and Lieutenant Moore took command of the Company.

On January 13th an order was received for the Company to supply an officer to take charge of the Boer

Refugee Camp at Brandfort, so Lieutenant Rew was detailed for this duty. This left only two officers in the Company. The Brandfort Boer Refugee Camp, which was in course of formation when Lieutenant Rew took charge, contained about 800 Refugees, mostly women and children, newly arrived from the districts of Hoopstad, Boshof, Bothaville, and Bultfontein. With the Hospital staff, military guard, native servants of the refugees, and others, the number in camp was over 1,100. There was also attached a camp of 1,200 natives, which was in a most unsatisfactory condition.

The Boer camp was splendidly situated, near the town, with a good water supply, and every preparation had been made for the welfare and comfort of the refugees. The majority of the staff to conduct these laagers was drawn from the Refugees themselves, but Lieutenant Rew had the assistance of Trooper Newitt, who was promoted Corporal by the General commanding the district. Mr. J. H. Cook, assistant magistrate of Ficksburg, assisted with the clerical work, and further help in this respect was obtained from the Court House. The rest of the officials were Boers. These all worked together in perfect harmony, and the camps soon became in complete working order.

The refugees were a very simple and homely people; every kindness and consideration was shown to them, and they fared far better than our own troops. They lived in tents or wagons, whichever they chose, and some obtained rooms in the town. The rations were good and sufficient, and there was a sweet and tobacco fund started by the officers of the garrison. To further the working of the camp, a police force was formed among their own people; a school was built for the children, and a cricket club formed. The refugees were allowed passes to visit the town and attend church. There was very little

sickness in this camp, and during the five weeks that Lieutenant Rew was in command there was not a single death. The refugees quickly became accustomed to the regulations and the somewhat strict regime of the camp, and were contented and happy. The sanitary regulations, however, had to be stringently enforced, as some of the Boers had not previously understood such arrangements. Most of the refugees wished that the war was over. They spoke in mutual contempt of Kruger's behaviour to the nation, and were loud in their aversion of the conduct of their relations, who yet made war on commando. All, however, were calmly resigned to their lot, and their general air was that of a people agreeably surprised at such good and charitable treatment at the hands of an enemy.

On February 17th the refugee camps were taken over by the civil administration. When the refugees heard that Lieutenant Rew was leaving they made urgent request that he might be allowed to remain as their Commandant, and to that effect forwarded to the authorities at Bloemfontein a petition signed by 135 names.

On January 27th, a patrol, consisting of Corporal Guilett and three men from 78th Company's post at Mount Pleasant, was fired on by some thirty Boers near Kruidfontein Drift, and twenty more tried to get round their flanks. The patrol retired, and after an exciting ride, managed to shake off their opponents, who followed them to within a few miles of camp. The Black scouts were also fired upon, and chased in. Next morning at 6 a.m., fifty men of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, under Captain Phibbs, arrived, and took up a position near the Yeomanry, bringing orders for the latter to move their camp into the valley, some few hundred yards away, for greater protection. This was quickly done, and

the place was then inspected by General Tucker, commanding the Bloemfontein district, who directed wire entanglements to be put up, and a block house to be built. The half Company of the Fusiliers left on February 1st. On February 3rd, 78th Company was sent out to Coleman's Farm on the Modder river, and brought in 178 cattle, 250 sheep, and a few horses.

On the 6th a patrol of Mounted Infantry and Yeomanry went out under Lieutenants Beamish and Lord Zouche to bring in the grain from the same place. Although Boers had visited the place, ninety-three large sacks of mealies were found by the patrol, who returned to camp at midnight. A few days afterwards a message was received from Coleman asking for ten of the Yeomanry to join his party and arrest two spies. Ten men, under the Sergeant-Major, were sent out at midnight, and returned next morning, bringing in two native spies.

On February 16th the detachment of the 3rd Yorks Mounted Infantry left Fischer's Farm for Rhenoster River. Their officer, Lieut. Beamish, had previously been sent sick into Bloemfontein. For a few days 78th Company had to take their place and do all extra duties, but afterwards the Mounted Infantry Company of the Royal Irish Fusiliers replaced them.

On February 20th the bulk of 78th Company that were left, namely, thirty-three non-commissioned officers and men, under Lieutenant Rew, left Fischer's Farm, to join Major Massey's Column at the Mounted Infantry Camp at Bloemfontein. A few men, with the Intelligence Department of the Company, remained at Fischer's Farm, under Lieutenant Moore, and were able to send in a great deal of information regarding the enemy.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER remaining a day at the Mounted Infantry Camp at Bloemfontein, Major Massey's column marched out on February 22nd, and bivouacked near No. 8 General Hospital. The force consisted of about five hundred mounted men, and four Companies of the Royal Irish Fusiliers. There were also two guns of O battery R.H.A., and a pom-pom under Captain Wheatley, and a Maxim belonging to the Fusiliers. The mounted men included some three hundred of Driscoll's scouts, under Major Driscoll and Captain J. Brabant. 78th Company, who, with sixteen details, were now fifty strong, were attached to a mixed force of mounted infantry, commanded by Major Marshall, of the Derby Regiment. The other detachments commanded by this officer were the mounted infantry companies of the 2nd Royal Irish Regiment, 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers, Lancashire Fusiliers, the 6th Warwick Regiment Mounted Infantry, and a detachment of the South African Constabulary. Lieutenant the Hon. L. A. Milles, of the 72nd Company, acted as Adjutant to this force. The Column was to operate in the south-west of the Orange River Colony, in conjunction with Colonels Plumer, Pilcher, and Williams, against De Wet, who, greatly harassed in Cape Colony, was now trying to recross the Orange River, and join Delarey in the north. These operations were a continuation of those told in the book, "On the Heels of De Wet," and the trail of the hunt is taken up where that story ends.

February 23rd was an unfortunate day for the Boers. On the morning of that day Massey's column made a very early start, and trekked off to the southwest, halting about mid-day. De Wet was hard pressed on all sides in Cape Colony. His horses were utterly exhausted, and his men in a wretched and pitiable condition. The oxen were no longer capable of pulling. On this day, therefore, February 23rd, which was the forty-seventh anniversary of the Boer Independence, De Wet found himself reluctantly compelled to celebrate the occasion by abandoning his last two remaining guns.

During the night of the 23rd, Massey's Column was suddenly startled by hearing a heavy burst of firing from the infantry picquets. All lights were instantly extinguished, and preparations made to meet an attack. As soon as communication could be established with the picquet it was discovered that the alarm was caused by two of Driscoll's scouts, who, on returning late to camp, rode right into the midst of the picquet and were mistaken for Boers. They had a very narrow escape.

Next morning, February 24th, the column trekked off again due south. Driscoll's scouts were acting as advance guard, and very soon they came upon a small Boer laager among a cluster of farms. When attacked, the Boers, as usual, held stoutly to a kopje, in order to cover the retreat of their wagons and families. In dislodging them from this hill Driscoll's lost two men killed and eight wounded. The column was, however, close behind the advance guard, and the guns soon came up and shelled the kopje, while 78th Company were sent off to the right to cut the enemy off. A troop, under Sergeant-Major Patchell, succeeded in capturing a wagon and span, in spite of the frantic efforts made by the Kaffir drivers to beat the oxen forward and escape.

78th Company also captured horses, cattle, and other loot. After bringing these in, the Yeomanry were sent out again to the right flank to clear all farms of grain and food stuffs. Each farm was in turn carefully surrounded, and the work accomplished. The Company arrived in camp about 6.30 p.m., bringing with them a number of fowls, geese, turkeys, etc., besides sack loads of vegetables and fruit. The column remained at the camping ground (Kuid Put) the whole of the 25th, while Major Marshall, with a hundred mounted men (including 78th Company) and a pom-pom, visited and searched all the farms in the neighbourhood. A party of Boers were seen some distance off, but there was no fighting.

Next morning, February 26th, the march was resumed at 5.45. 78th Company were on the right flank, about two miles from the column. They pushed out a patrol of five men still further to the right, and this partly cleverly surprised some Boers who were having breakfast in a farm house. The men, however, escaped at the back, but sixty horses were captured. On searching the premises some dynamite was also found.

Boers now began to hover about the right flank, and presently opened fire from a large kopje that stood almost in front of the Company. Two men of 78th Company, Corporal Kentish and Trooper Godwin, who had advanced right up to this hill, had a very anxious time of it, for when they tried to retreat they were impeded by wire fencing. A perfect rain of bullets poured down upon them, while the remainder of the Company, who were also within the fire zone, were, owing to the wire fence, powerless to help. Luckily, however, these two men managed to get away unscathed, and their marvellous escape does not say much for the Boer marksmanship. This and subsequent events proved that though the enemy's range finding may be quicker than

that of the British, yet their actual marksmanship is not so good as is usually supposed.

When the main body saw what was happening on the right flank, guns were brought to bear on the kopje, while 78th Company made for the rising ground on their left, which was a long, tapering continuation of the big hill. When this ridge was gained, the Company saw the enemy streaming away across the open veldt, making for the next line of hills. They at once hurried after them, while the big guns continued to blaze away at the vacated kop! The main column then bore off to the left to get round the long hill, as it could not alter its course to follow the Boers. 78th Company still had the Boers on their right, though hidden by hills and rough country.

At 11.30 the column halted, and the advance guard stopped at a farm a long way ahead. 78th Company on the right flank also halted at a farm level with the advance guard. Here abundance of fruit was found. Presently, a number of Boers were seen to enter and pass through a farm still further to the right, and about 1,000 yards distant. It was most tantalising to 78th Company to find itself a fixture, and not be able to do anything but send in reports. Soon, however, the Boers, after proceeding for a little distance, turned back, as they probably found the route they had taken was too dangerous. When they once more entered and passed through the farm, 78th Company could stand it no longer. Without waiting for any further orders, Lieutenant Rew gave the word, and they galloped straight for the farm. It was a mad race across the open veldt with ranks well extended. It took only a very few minutes, but the enemy also galloped away quickly, and by the time the Yeomanry arrived nothing was to be seen of them except the dust of their tracks, hanging over the nearest ridge!

It occasioned a good deal of surprise that the Boers should offer so little opposition, but they rarely faced a determined attack. Finding themselves baffled of their prey, some of the Yeomen now dismounted and swarmed through the garden in search of fruit, utterly regardless of the proximity of the enemy. They were promptly recalled, but stupidly formed up in close order on the far side of the farm, which the Boers had just vacated. They were hardly in their places when a sharp burst of rifle fire was opened on them from the ridge over which the veil of dust was still hanging. A more convenient target than fifty men and horses standing still in close order at such short range could not have been wished for. Fortunately, no one was hit. Cover was quickly found for the horses, while the men lined a ditch beside the orchard and directed some volleys at the ridge. No further firing came from the Boers.

78th Company then started off again as the right flank guard. The route which the column took obliged the Company to move parallel with a ridge which was about half a mile long. Firing immediately commenced from the hill, and one of the Warwick Mounted Infantry, who was leading a spare horse, and had advanced to within 800 yards of this hill, was struck by a bullet and killed. It now became evident that the British and Boer routes lay in much the same direction. The enemy were most probably collecting supplies and remounts for De Wet, who was badly in need of them, and was looking for a crossing over the Orange River. It was known that he had ordered a concentration of men, horses, and supplies to take place at Phillipolis.

Major Massey did not intend to follow up these Boers, as he had another object in view. He was, however, obliged to protect his right flank, and this delayed the column considerably. The Boer force on the ridge

was evidently a strong flanking party sent out by the enemy to cover their movements. The guns of the main column now took up a good position facing the ridge, while 78th Company watered their horses at a farm immediately below, and watched proceedings. 15 pounders, pompoms, and maxims were all brought into action, and a continuous flight of shells whizzed through the air directly over the heads of the Yeomen, while the noise of the cannonade was terrific. Notwithstanding this, the firing from the ridge still continued. Finally, all the available men of Driscoll's scouts were sent to clear the kopje, and towards evening it was captured. The column then bivouacked, and 78th Company received orders to go and relieve Driscoll's scouts.

The Boers had not trekked very far, and from the top of the kopje the Company had an interesting view of both British and Boer camps. Some of the enemy were seen hovering about, and even came within nine hundred yards to water their horses, but a few shots dispersed them. The Company remained all night on the ridge, and fortunately it was warm, for they had no kit or covering of any kind.

At 4 a.m. next morning, February 27th, the Company stood to arms. The early hours of the morning were very cold and chilly. The main column was on the move by five o'clock, and so were the Boers on the opposite side of the hill. As soon as the column was clear the Yeomanry left the position, rather expecting that the Boers would sieze it and begin firing again, but only a few shots were heard. The column was nearly three miles long with prisoners, refugees, captured stock, and wagons. It took two hours to cross the Reit river, and then halted at about 4 p.m. at Poortje farm. During the night there was heavy rain, and the troops, without shelter, were in a miserable condition.

The march was resumed at 6.45 next morning (February 28th), and the column advanced almost due south, keeping Jagersfontein on the right. 78th Company formed the rearguard. The scorching sun soon dried everything, but the great heat and monotony of the slow trekking told heavily on the men, after an uncomfortable and more or less sleepless night. The column halted at Groot Kelvetfontein, after sending the prisoners into Edenburg under an escort of infantry and a few horsemen. Plenty of fruit was now obtained, as the farms in this part of the Colony are very flourishing. Grapes were abundant, and peaches, pears, quinces, and pomegranates, oranges, nuts, and figs kept tumbling out of the men's pockets and kits as they rode into their lines that evening. On this date De Wet managed to effect a crossing over the Orange river, and headed north. The result of his invasion of Cape Colony was that he lost all his stores, all his convoy, and some 300 men, and thousands of horses.

The following day, the column remained at Groot Kelvetfontein, while all the mounted men and guns made a reconnaissance in force towards Boomplaats. About eight miles out this party captured a Cape cart and wagon which were leaving a farm with some wounded and unwounded Boers. All food stuffs and vehicles that could not be brought away were burnt, and the force returned to camp early in the afternoon.

Information was now received that Boers were in the habit of visiting a farm at Boomplaats, owned by a Mr. Visser, who was J.P. for Jagersfontein, and which was some distance beyond the place which had just been patrolled. At 4 a.m. on the following morning, March 2nd, therefore, the same force left camp with the object of trying to take these Boers unawares. It was quite dark when the troops set out, and they were well

on their way to Boomplaats before daylight appeared. All the ridges around the farm were quietly occupied, and everything promised well for the success of the plan. About breakfast time some forty Boers appeared and rode unsuspectingly towards the trap. Most unluckily, however, a rifle went off prematurely, and the enemy galloped off, and escaped with nothing worse than a volley behind them at six hundred yards. The force then denuded the farm, and the work of driving the captured sheep and cattle back to camp fell to 78th Company. This was rather tiring work, and the men were very glad to get back after a long day in the saddle.

CHAPTER XII.

THE column was to have halted at Groot Kelvetfontein for another day, and early in the morning, March 3rd, 78th Company sent out two Cossack posts of one non-commissioned officer and five men each. The march was, however, unexpectedly resumed, and these posts could not be informed. 78th Company formed the advance guard, and the direction taken was again towards Boomplaats.

Before the range of hills of this place could be crossed, a mountain pass had first to be secured, and a troop of 78th Company was sent forward to take it. Breaking into two parties as they galloped off out of the advance guard, the Yeomen were quickly in possession of each side of the pass. Meanwhile, many rifles and a machine gun were posted to cover the movement. In spite of the great need for these precautions, several of 78th Company, with reckless gallantry, galloped on ahead, and rode through the pass without waiting. Fortunately for them there were no Boers about.

Many horses were discovered in this pass, and amongst them one with saddle and bridle, which was found to be a 78th horse belonging to one of the posts which had been sent out early in the morning. This, naturally, caused some anxiety to be felt with regard to the fate of the rider. The force took a considerable time to get through the pass, which was rugged, steep, and narrow. A very rough drift over a spruit had then

to be crossed. A patrol of 78th Company was sent out to search for a better one, but nothing could be found for over four miles. This party saw a number of Boers on their right, and these were also seen by the main column, who sent a messenger to warn the patrol. The messenger, however, missed the party, and search had to be made for him. When the drift was at last passed the column continued to trek until 3 p.m., when a halt was made. 78th Company had to hold a kopje in front, and as a severe thunderstorm came on, their position was not a very enviable one. Late in the evening they were relieved by the infantry outposts, and returned to camp.

Major Massey halted his little column for the next two days, and sent out patrols to obtain news and watch for De Wet. Reconnoitring parties fared badly, for the enemy were in all directions. A party of the Mounted Infantry, who were hard pressed, sought shelter in a donga. They were surrounded, and two men were wounded and taken prisoners. They were subsequently released, and came into camp in the usual half-naked condition. A post of the Lancashire Fusiliers Mounted Infantry was attacked; and some men of Driscoll's scouts were held up, and Lieutenant Moss was wounded. When news of this reached the camp, a party of 100 men, including 78th Company, were at once sent off with a pompom and an ambulance. The wounded officer was picked up and placed in the ambulance, and then the party proceeded at once to demolish a farm which was close by, and from which the Boers had already fled. There was a good deal of grain and forage also to be destroyed, and some vehicles which could not be brought away. When the work of demolition was completed the force returned to camp. Most of 78th Company were immediately sent out again under Lieutenant Rew to picquet a hill on the south side of



"DOLLIE" BEFORE THE WAR.

Lieutenant Moore's horse "Dollie." She was generally known as the "Little Mare," although she was about 15-2½. She went out to the war twice, and after fighting was over, won a couple of races at Mafeking, and has since had four foals.



"DOLLIE" AFTER THE WAR.



the camp, and here they remained watching for De Wet for the next twenty-four hours.

The missing Yeomanry posts meanwhile returned, and the mystery of the riderless horse found on the veldt near Boomplaats was explained. When the men found that the main column had trekked off without leaving any message as to their destination, they made their way to Edenburg. Here they found out the direction the column had taken, and immediately trekked off again to find them. They succeeded in this after various adventures. One man's horse broke loose when picketed, and galloped off to join the wild ponies of the veldt. This was, of course, the one discovered by the Company at Boomplaats. The man arrived safely in camp on a new mount.

The men of 78th Company on outpost duty spent an uneventful night. The dew was very heavy, and their blankets and coats were soaked through. Soon after daybreak, breakfast was brought out to them in a Cape cart from the column, and they were allowed to light fires on the camp side of the hill. The Company remained all day on this hill, and about noon two great clouds of dust were seen rolling across the veldt in the distance, the one closely followed by the other. This was reported to be De Wet hotly pursued by a British column.

At sundown the Company was relieved by Driscoll's Scouts. Just as the men were leaving the hill a few shots were fired, and some bullets passed over their heads. Now that their long vigil was over, the Yeomen returned to camp in great spirits, gaily singing every popular song that they could think of. The outposts were not left unmolested during the night. There were several alarms and sharp bursts of rifle fire, but nothing serious occurred.

In the morning the 78th Company was under orders to make a reconnaissance to Jagersfontein, but it became definitely known that De Wet had somehow or other managed to pass, and was on his way north without having been seen by the column. Instantly the whole force set off to Edenburg, with the object of entraining there for the north, so as to head De Wet off before he could reach the Vet river. In eight hours the column reached Edenburg station, having marched twenty miles. Train after train then steamed off in haste, and 78th Company spent the whole night loading up transport, hauling guns and wagons, and packing horses into the train. At five o'clock on the morning of March 7th, they were ready to clean up some cattle trucks, and make them fit for themselves to travel a day's journey in. An hour later their train started, and Bloemfontein was reached at 10 a.m. Then a horrible discovery was made. All the ventilators in a truck containing ten horses belonging to the Warwick Mounted Infantry had been accidentally closed, and when the door was opened to feed the poor animals, every one of them was found to be suffocated. It was a most painful and sickening sight.

The journey from Bloemfontein was then continued and Virginia Siding was reached at 7 p.m. Here everything was in great confusion. A heavy downpour of rain was steadily falling, and the ground all round the station was a perfect quagmire. There was only room for two trucks to be unloaded at a time, and seven trains were waiting. The men soon became drenched to the skin, stumbled over each other in the darkness, and slipped and fell in the thick mud. They were tired and hungry, as they had not had any proper meal since the morning of the previous day. It is not surprising that some pretty strong language was heard, which fully justified the expression, "swear like a trooper!"

The work of detraining proceeded with difficulty, but gradually order was restored. The horses were got out, and the poor, tired, hungry beasts gave very little trouble. There was not much sleep for anyone that night, as the cold and mud and incessant downpour rendered it almost an impossibility. Nevertheless, the men managed to keep up their spirits, and one party sang comic songs cheerfully all through the night.

When morning dawned the rain was still falling, and there was no prospect yet of a good meal, as fires could not be lighted. Finally, some men succeeded with difficulty in lighting one under a blanket, and some water was boiled and tea made. The work of detraining continued all day, but the ground was in such a sodden and boggy condition that the men and horses had to be moved to a drier place. Numbers of trains passed during the day, and several of these contained some of the new Yeomanry belonging to the second contingent which was raised at home. These had just arrived, and were now on their way to Johannesburg.

Next morning, March 9th, the column left Virginia Siding, and marched to the west, along the bank of the Vet river. Its destination was the drift at the junction of the Vet and Zand rivers, where it was anticipated that De Wet would pass. At 10 a.m. a drift was reached, through which the main column passed to the north side of the Vet River. The crossing of this drift took up most of the day, and the column halted at about 4.30. 78th Company, who formed the left flank, did not cross with the others, but remained behind to patrol the south side of the river during the whole of this day. Some Boers were shelled out of the bush ahead, but they continued to snipe the advance guard. Towards evening, when the Company wished to cross the river, they had some difficulty, owing to its swollen condition after so much

rain, and darkness fell before the drift could be found. This was discovered by Trooper Moses, who boldly plunged his horse into the river, and luckily found an easy passage to the other side, a distance of about 30 yards. He was followed by the rest of the Company. On reaching the opposite side, however, the bank was so high and steep that it was impossible to ride or lead the horses up to it, and so a further channel had to be crossed which contained a deep hole, while all around was a kind of quicksand. Here the horses floundered about in the darkness, and had to be pulled into safety by those already over. At last all got safely across, and after riding some little distance, the bivouack fires of the main column were discovered.

At 6 o'clock next morning, March 10th, Massey's force was off again, and caught up Colonel William's column at Rietfontein at 3 p.m. Both forces camped together to watch the drifts where the Vet and Zand Rivers meet. 78th Company had been at this spot before on September 29th, when Colonel Tobin's and Colonel White's columns advanced from opposite sides and surprised the Boers who were encamped there. There was still no sign or news of Det Wet, and it was rumoured that he had already passed.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE following day, March 11th, Massey left Colonel Williams, and turned north to patrol the country in that direction. The weather was exceedingly unpleasant. A continuous drizzle fell all day, and the whole country was covered with a thick mist. A patrol of 78th Company, under Lieutenant Rew, was sent out to gather information about the enemy, while the main column halted. It found unmistakable signs of Boers about, such as fires and half-cooked meat in deserted farms, and some wagons were seen at a distance. Returning to camp with this information they took fresh horses, and went out again to follow up the trail, the main column also moving on. 78th Company had now a more severe task, as it was very difficult in the thick mist to observe the direction taken by the column, and at the same time follow up the trail of the Boers. One of the connecting files rode too far ahead, and caused great delay and confusion. Finally, towards evening, as they were about to return to the column, the patrol located a small Boer laager. Darkness setting in, and the whereabouts of the column being unknown, the few Yeomen were powerless to act. The darkness of the night was added to by the thick mist, and it was a puzzle to know in which direction to head, but eventually they were lucky enough to find the main body at Bultpan, where they had halted. The Brigadier was very pleased with the information brought in. The column remained at Bultpan all the next day. Some of Colonel Williams'

men, who were passing the camp, discovered three Boers concealed in a mealie field inside the outposts. They were evidently spies trying to obtain information of our movements. After shooting the horse of a "runner" they got away.

At 3 a.m. on the morning of the 13th a hundred mounted men, consisting of about equal numbers of 78th Company, the Royal Irish Rifles Mounted Infantry, and the Fusiliers Mounted Infantry, under Major Marshall, left camp with a pom-pom. A Boer had surrendered, and promised to lead this force to where forty of the enemy could be found, in return for our bringing his family and stock into our lines. He said it was only four miles to the farm, but it was quite twelve miles before the place was reached, and then it was found to be deserted. The guide said his family were only at the next farm, but Major Marshall refused to be led on any further.

On the return journey 78th Company formed the advance guard. Boers very soon started sniping from a mealie patch on the left. Their place of concealment was soon located, and they were hunted out of it and chased. The hunt led across some large pans of shallow water, which are characteristic of this part of the country. Some of these were nearly a mile in width, and the gun horses had an exceedingly rough journey over the soaked ground. From ridge to ridge the Boers, who were a small party of scouts, were chased until they got beyond the spot where the patrol of 78th Company had previously discovered the laager on March 11th. Here the Boers were joined by others, and so they halted and changed their tactics. Instead of retreating any further they turned round and began to advance towards Major Marshall's little force. The gun was quickly trained upon them, while every man threw himself flat and took

aim. A few volleys were sufficient, and the enemy began to retire again. Two men belonging to the Royal Irish Rifles Mounted Infantry had been captured earlier in the day, and one of them had been hit. The other now returned to the force, after having been stripped and released. He brought the news of his comrade's misfortune, so a party was despatched to look for the wounded man. His bloodstained clothes were found in a farm, but no trace of the man could be discovered. This farm stood very near the place where the laager had been located, and it now seemed apparent that the Boer guide had wilfully misled the force.

Meanwhile, Massey's column had received orders to march back at once to the line at Zand River, as De Wet, finding the drifts held in front of him, had turned east and crossed the railway line just above Brandfort. An officer was immediately sent out to find Major Marshall's force, and tell him that he was to return straight back to Zand River, a distance of about twenty-five miles. This order being received at the end of a long day's march was most unwelcome. Both men and horses were tired and weary, having started without breakfast; in addition to this the way back had to be found without a guide, as the Boers had collected all the Kaffirs throughout the country side, so that no information with regard to their movements might be given. A large Kaffir caravan had been captured from the enemy during the afternoon, and the wounded were now placed on these wagons, which started off towards the Zand River. Directly the force left the farm where the missing man's clothes had been found, the Boers took possession of it, and began sniping, and as soon as it became quite dark they manœuvred round to the right and succeeded in recapturing the Kaffir convoy, which was going along the main road at some little distance from the rest of the

troops. If they had only known the exhausted condition that the whole force was in, a little extra effort on their part might have given considerable trouble. But the Boers very soon stopped sniping, and drew off altogether. Many horses lagged behind, and their riders, who were too tired to urge them forward, slipped off and lay on the ground, physically unable to sit any longer in the saddle. The pom-pom horses were also in a sorry condition, as they had pulled the guns at a trot during the greater part of the day, over ground which was often a morass. One after another had to be taken out and dragged along behind the gun which they should have drawn.

At last the river was struck, but it was fringed with a belt of thick scrub and bush, through which it was almost impossible to distinguish the track. Some of the men crawled on their hands and knees, and found some fresh tracks, which it was hoped might be those of Massey's column. These led to a wire fence, indistinguishable in the moonlight, over which the Royal Artillery Sergeant Major, in command of the pompom, came a heavy cropper. It was evident, therefore, the column could not have passed this way, or the wire would have been broken down. Fresh tracks had to be sought for, and the exhausted force trekked on and on, through trees and bush, over dongas and spruits, stumbling and splashing, too weary to keep a look out of any description, and only longing to see the lights of the camp, which were so slow in appearing. At last, from the top of an eminence, a joyful sight presented itself. Just below was a great twinkling sea of lights from the bivouack fires of two columns encamped side by side. Shouts went up, which were answered from the camps, and a short time afterwards all were in their proper lines. This force had marched fifty miles, and had been eighteen hours in the saddle, with no food but green mealie cobs and some muddy water all day.

At 6 a.m. next morning, March 14th, the two columns left Jackal's Kraal and marched to Virginia Siding on the Zand River, which they reached about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The men and horses who had been on the forced march of the previous day could barely drag themselves along. The pompom had to be attached to a wagon, as the horses were not able to pull it. One of 78th Company, Trooper Chester, who had fallen ill the previous day on the long trek, was reported to be dangerously ill with enteric. The poor fellow had not very much chance of getting well, jolting along in an ambulance wagon, and fed on diluted Swiss milk, but he ultimately recovered.

The column remained for a few days at Virginia Siding awaiting further orders. Here the sad news was received that Trooper Urmston had died from enteric at Springfontein. He had been sent there sick from Boomplaats.

On March 17th, 78th Company was sent to join Major Pine Coffin's column, which was halted at Virginia Siding. Having done this, further orders were received that they were to go on to Ventersburgh Station, and report to the Commandant there. The Company arrived after dark, and were most hospitably entertained by the garrison, a detachment of the North Lancashire Regiment. From Ventersburgh Station the Company was ordered to go on to Kroonstad, and left for this place at about 10 o'clock on the following morning, March 18th. That night they bivouacked at Boschrand Siding, where again great hospitality was shown them by the 3rd Royal Scots, who were stationed there.

Next day, March 19th, 78th Company arrived at Kroonstad, after a short march, and were met by a Staff Captain, who showed them their camping ground.

General W. Knox was in command at this place. His chief Staff Officer, Captain Carr, informed 78th Company that they were to await here the arrival of the new Imperial Yeomanry, form a new regiment with them, and then trek with General Broadwood. The Company was the first to arrive of all the mounted troops who subsequently formed General Elliot's big division.

The camping ground was to the south-east of the town, and had not been used since Lord Roberts' advance on Pretoria, and consequently everything was fresh and green. All carcasses had been collected and burnt at a distance, and only a few graves marked with boulders or roughly hewn crosses showed where the great army had passed. A Cossack post on a very exposed kopje, a couple of miles from camp, was also taken over by the Company. This post was within range of another outpost which belonged to the enemy. The Boers came at 6.30 every morning, and returned at the same time in the evening. Occasionally they used to slip down into the valley separating the two positions, and annex a cow or a sheep which had strayed away from the town's commissariat stock. The British post was relieved every three days. On March 21st Lieutenant E. C. M. Layton (Hampshire I.Y.) arrived, and was posted to 78th Company.

On the 23rd General Elliot's camp was suddenly moved to the south side of the Bloem Spruit, about three miles further from the town. This necessitated extra picquets and sentries. The work of entrenching the new camp was carried on vigorously, and a number of patrols were sent out. A patrol of the 78th Company had a very exciting time. They were surrounded and cornered by a party of Boers in some scrub near a spruit. The men got down into the spruit, and leading their horses under the bank, managed to slip through the Boer

cordon. When the burghers discovered this they gave chase, and pursued them hotly until camp was in sight.

The Company only spent a few days at the new camping ground, for just as the work of digging trenches and otherwise fortifying the place was completed, the division was recalled to the old quarters nearer the town.

On March 27th the Company's isolated Cossack post was attacked at dawn by about twenty of the enemy. The Boers' plans with regard to time and numbers were excellent, and the attack ought to have succeeded, but the Yeomen, whose strength was only one non-commissioned officer and six men, held out valiantly and kept them at bay, while one of their number made his way to the camp for assistance. Lieutenant Layton and a few men quickly galloped off to the rescue, and when the Boers saw them approaching they speedily took to flight.

On March 31st the new Company arrived from Johannesburg. It consisted of two officers and one hundred and ten men, with kit and saddles. These men after a few weeks training at Aldershot, had embarked at Southampton on February 22nd, and arrived at Cape Town in the middle of March. From there they had gone on direct to Elandsfontein, where they remained until they were sent on to Kroonstad. The majority of the draft for 78th Company were Scotchmen. The camp now became most animated; remounts poured in, and 78th Company soon had a total of 180 horses.

The work of getting these new 78th men into shape now started. The old company worked with the new during the training, and thus the nucleus of the Company consisted of men who had learned by experience the best methods of dealing with the Boers, and were consequently able to give the most practical instruction. Advanced, rear, and flank guards were practised every day, the country being well adapted for these exercises. The new

men worked with great keenness, and made rapid progress, especially in the important exercise of dismounting and seizing a position quickly, and getting sharply away again. There were none of the disadvantages of Maitland Camp here, and no overcrowding of men and horses. On April 5th, Second Lieutenant H. C. Swaine (Captain 1st V.B. R. W. Surrey Regiment), arrived, and was posted to 78th Company.

By April 11th all the vast preparations at Kroonstad were complete, and the mighty mounted force which had been steadily collected, equipped, and trained there, was ready for action. A new epoch in the history of the campaign commenced when Lord Kitchener sent out this great force to sweep the Orange River Colony of "every living thing!"

CHAPTER XIV.

MEANWHILE De Wet, after he had crossed the line to escape from the traps laid for him, in which 78th Company took part, made for Senekal, and remained in the neighbourhood of that town while the great preparations were going on at Kroonstad. From Senekal he went to Heilbron, and from Heilbron to Vrede. Thence he made his way back to Heilbron, crossed the line, captured a post, and visited Petrusburg.

On April 11th General Elliot's Division left Kroonstad to take part in that stern and relentless campaign which gradually wore down the enemy's powers of resistance, and compelled them to surrender fourteen months later.

The three Brigades which formed the Division were under General Broadwood, Colonel Bethune, and Colonel De Lisle.

General Broadwood's Brigade consisted of:—

The XIIth Regiment Imperial Yeomanry,
The IVth Regiment Imperial Yeomanry,
The 7th Dragoon Guards,
Two guns 82nd Battery Royal Field Artillery,
Two guns "O" Battery Royal Horse Artillery,
With pom-poms and 2 Colt guns attached to the
XIIth I.Y.

Colonel Bethune's Brigade consisted of:—

The 3rd Dragoon Guards,
A Regiment of the Prince of Wales' Light Horse,
2 Sections Royal Field Artillery.

Colonel De Lisle's Brigade consisted of:—

The Imperial Bushmen Corps,
The 6th Regiment of Mounted Infantry,
2 Sections Royal Field Artillery.

78th Company now belonged to the XIIth Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, as the XXth Battalion had been broken up. 72 and 79 Companies were attached to the Imperial Light Horse, while 76 and 78 remained as separate units.

The XIIth Battalion Imperial Yeomanry was commanded by Colonel R. H. F. W. Wilson. Major Forbes was second in command, and Captain Crane was Adjutant. It consisted of the remains of the following Companies of the original Imperial Yeomanry, augmented by the new men, so that the strength of each was nearly 150: 78th (Roughriders), 76th (Roughriders), 55th (Northumberland), 46th (Belfast), 44th (Suffolk), and 42nd (Hertfordshire). 78th Company was not so strong as the others, as some of the draft intended for them were posted to the new 76th Company, which had not yet been joined by the old Company, under Captain Patterson, who were on their way from Ladybrand. The officers of 78th Company were Lieutenant Rew in command, with Lieutenants E. C. M. Layton, and H. Jude, and 2nd Lieutenant H. C. Swaine.

No tents were taken on the march, and as little kit as possible. The first day's trek was to Doorn Spruit, about ten miles to the north-west of Kroonstad. Here the division bivouacked for the night. Each brigade

had a long and cumbersome train of ox wagons, which grew larger and more burdensome every day during the early marches of the division.

On the morning of the 12th April reveillé sounded at 5 a.m., and the division made another short trek of seven miles to the Rhenoster River, where camp was formed. The march was resumed on the following day in a northerly direction. Boers were in hiding alongside the Rhenoster River, and the 55th Company, Imperial Yeomanry, who formed the advance guard, became engaged, and lost one man captured. 78th Company, who were guarding the left flank of the column, sent No. 4 troop forward to their assistance. Meanwhile, another party of Boers placed themselves in a house beside a spruit which ran parallel with the brigade, and began sniping at 78th Company as they marched past in extended formation. It was the new men's baptism of fire, but neither horses nor men were in the least disconcerted. When the Company was safely past, the guns of the column shelled the Boers before they could begin sniping at the rearguard. The march ended at 4.30, when the brigade bivouacked at Rhenoster River. The ox-wagons, which contained the rations and kit, did not arrive until midnight. The brigade remained at this place all the following day, April 14th. 78th Company was sent out to some farms a few miles from camp to clear them of grain and stock. They returned with twelve hundred sheep and four hundred head of cattle, which pleased the General very much.

The next day, April 15th, a short trek was made from Rhenoster Kop to Wit Kopje. Boers were still hanging about the columns, and one of the Derby Imperial Yeomanry was wounded, and two missing. Sixteen of the Prince of Wales' Light Horse, belonging to Colonel Bethune's Brigade, were captured while driving sheep to the column.

General Broadwood's Brigade left Wit Kopje on the 16th, and marched to the Vaal River. Only two squadrons of the XIIth Imperial Yeomanry remained, as the others had been sent with dispatches to Colonel Bethune. Two troops of 78th Company, supported the advance guard (76th Company Imperial Yeomanry), while the other two troops were on the right flank. Several ludicrous incidents occurred during the day. Some of 76th Company were too far to the right, and seeing some men at a farm house, began to fire upon them. They were, however, repulsed, and one man, who became dismounted, had to run five miles until he found the column again. It turned out afterwards that "the enemy," were some of Colonel De Lisle's troops! Later in the day Paget's Horse poured some volleys into Colonel Bethune's column, which, luckily, did no damage. General Elliot and General Broadwood both galloped over to the scene of the disturbance.

At Vredfort the transport went into camp, while the mounted men and the guns went on to the Vaal River, eight miles further. Here they were attacked by a party of Boers, who kept up a steady fire in the hope that they would be able to keep the column back until they got some cattle safely across the river, but 76th and 78th Companies, covered by the guns, which kept blazing away into the Transvaal, swooped down upon them, and succeeded in capturing the cattle. These were then driven on into camp.

On the following day, April 17th, the column marched about ten miles to a farm at Schietkop. After a halt of a day, the march was resumed on the 19th to Vredfort Road Station, a distance of fifteen miles. Another day's halt was enjoyed at this place to take in supplies, and then the column set off again on the 21st, and trekked besides the railway line to Kopjes Station,

where they bivouacked. The graves of those of the 4th Derby Regiment, who had fallen, after a brave defence, during De Wet's attack on this place, were seen here, and the Yeomanry were called to attention as they marched past.

Next morning, April 22nd, the column marched seventeen miles to Honning Spruit, where they camped for two days, preparatory to taking part in a big move on the east side of the railway.

The old 78th Company's trekking days were now over. On the first day of the halt, General Broadwood inspected the horses, and expressed himself well satisfied with their condition. He remarked that he wished there were more horses as well cared for as those belonging to 78th Company. Lord Chesham also arrived, and a very good report of the Company, including the new contingent, was given him.

On April 24th, Captain Patterson, with the remains of the old 76th Company, XXth Battalion Imperial Yeomanry, joined the brigade. On the following day April 26th, the old 78th Company (thirty-three non-commissioned officers and men), together with the old 76th Company, and all who were left of the original squadrons, left Honning Spruit for home. The following day they arrived at Kroonstad, Bloemfontein was reached on the 28th, and Cape Town on May 3rd. Thus 78th Company XXth Battalion, finished its work in South Africa. It was joined by the other two officers, Captain Moore and Lieutenant Lord Zouche, and embarked on the "Avondale Castle," with the rest of the Battalion, at Cape Town on May 15th, arriving at Southampton on June 9th. During the passage home, the Company had the misfortune to lose another of its number, Trooper Stephenson dying from enteric fever, on June 3rd.

Captain Moore returned to South Africa with his own Regiment (5th Battalion Middlesex Regiment), in which he was Lieutenant-Colonel. Lieutenant Rew was asked to volunteer for another year, and remained to command the new Company. Troopers Atcherley, Barker, and Moses also remained for further service. The two former soon afterwards received commissions, while Moses was made a Troop Sergeant. Lieutenant Rew was promoted Captain in May, 1901, and all served until the end of the war.

76TH COMPANY.

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76TH COMPANY I.Y. AT LAWTON'S FARM.



CHAPTER XV.

76TH COMPANY.

1900 **I**T will be remembered that 76th Company (Captain C. H. Colvin) was, when we last heard of them, left in Camp at Wellington. Orders to go northwards were awaited with eagerness, and naturally officers and men were delighted when a wire came from the Colonel ordering them to entrain for Bloemfontein on June 20th, 1900.

No time was lost, and the duty of seeing that the horses and transport mules were boxed, fell to Lieutenant Pelly. He had to race against time, but, with willing help, he succeeded in loading up the animals at the rate of one a minute, there being altogether 134 horses and 16 mules. These were packed like sardines in a tin, alternately heads and tails, ten going to each truck. As the journey to Bloemfontein took three days and three nights, the problem of watering and feeding these poor animals was a difficult one, which required a good deal of solving. Early on the morning of June 23rd, it was discovered that several of the horses had fallen down in the trucks, so the train had to be pulled up at a siding and the animals taken out. One of Lieutenant Pelly's chargers was found to be dead.

The Company arrived at Bloemfontein about noon the same day, and here they were met by Colonel Colvin, Major Anderson, and Captain Lord Maitland, from whom

they heard the unwelcome news that 78th Company had been split up to do outpost duty around Bloemfontein, and that a similar fate awaited 76th Company. It was with sincere regret that both officers and men heard this news, as to be separated from their Commanding Officer was the very last thing they would have wished for. He was unanimously requested to represent the case at Headquarters, at Pretoria, on his arrival there. This he did, but without avail, and save for a few hours at Bloemfontein some months later, the Company did not again see the Colonel until he welcomed them back to England at Southampton.

To resume our narrative, however, there was no delay in getting horses and luggage quickly out of the train. Wagons were loaded up, horses saddled, and the Company marched off through Bloemfontein to a place some two miles outside the town, where the tents were ready. Here they encamped for the night.

Next day (Sunday, June 24th) the Company was divided, and ordered to take over three outposts, under Captain Colvin. Lieutenants Magniac and Thursby took up their position at Brand Kop, three miles south-west of Bloemfontein, while Lieutenant Patterson and Lieutenant Pelly, with two troops, marched to a post called Lawton's Farm, about six miles south of Bloemfontein. This splitting up of the Company naturally caused a great deal of inconvenience, and upset all messing and cooking arrangements.

It was now mid-winter, and the cold at nights was excessive. In the morning, everything was covered with thick, white frost. It must be remembered that the altitude of this place was some 4,600 feet above sea-level.

Each section of the Company tried to make itself as comfortable as possible, and the men busied themselves making breastworks, building saddle racks, and con-

structing novel ovens in which to bake their bread. These latter consisted of hollowed out ant's nests, and it was found that the bread baked in them was excellent. One of the greatest wants felt was that of fuel, nothing but dried cowdung being at times available. Even this, however, was not to be despised, as it made an excellent fire, something like that made by peat. The Company was very fortunate in possessing an old hand at the game in Trooper Moss, who had spent seven years fighting and marching through Mashonaland and Matabeleland. A better all-round man could not have been wished for, as he could shoot a buck, cook an omelet, drive a 16 span mule-team, ride a buck jumper, and converse in any of the known South African lingoes—all with the greatest ease.

The high ground around Lawton's Farm provided excellent positions for the outposts, for here they could remain concealed, while at the same time they could watch every inch of the country for miles. The Lawton's were Yorkshire people, and had a very nice farm at the beginning of the war, but it had suffered considerably from the depredations of both friend and foe, and at this time all the fences were cut, posts burnt, and cattle driven off. Miss Lawton was exceedingly kind, and hospitable, and did everything in her power to make the lonely outpost life comfortable.

The detachment at Brand Kop was much nearer Bloemfontein, and the camp was situated in a gully on the kopje, so that all the tents were invisible except from the town side. Above the camp rose a steep cliff, which had been very strongly held by the Boers against Lord Roberts at the time of his advance on Bloemfontein. The gun emplacements which the burghers had built afforded an excellent position for the Yeomanry's sentry. Very long distances could be seen in the clear South

African atmosphere, and, as the country round Bloemfontein is exceedingly level, a hill 80 miles off was plainly visible from this kopje.

The holding of these three posts entailed a considerable amount of work, and a great deal of responsibility, as for some time there were practically no troops between them and Bloemfontein, and if the enemy had been able to break through the outposts and surprise the garrison, they would most probably have captured the town and destroyed its millions of pounds' worth of stores, equipment, remounts, and supplies of all kinds. The three posts had up to this time been occupied by some three hundred and fifty men, so that 76th Company had now to do with a hundred men what had previously been done by over three times that number. This was extremely hard on both officers and men, who were only able to have every second night in bed, as sentries had to be constantly posted at all weak points, and patrols pushed well out to the front both day and night. These patrols kept touch with 78th Company, who were stationed at Boeshman's Kop, and this distribution made 76th and 78th Companies together responsible for over half the outer outpost line round Bloemfontein. Heliographic messages in cypher from Headquarters had also to be read at all hours of the day and night, so that the outposts were kept on the alert and at hard work all the time that they were engaged on this duty. This section of the outposts was for the greater part of the time under Colonel Long, R.H.A. The Company saw a deal of this able and energetic officer, and the more they saw the more they wished that they might be fortunate enough to have him as their Commander in any affray with the Boers.

On the night of June 26th a tragedy very nearly occurred to one of the officers at Brand Kop. Captain

Colvin, Lieutenant Magniac, and the Sergeant-Major, were out on a kopje watching some suspicious looking lights which they took to be Boers signalling. Lieut. Magniac was sent back to camp for a telescope, and on coming out again was challenged by the sentry. Not hearing the challenge he gave no reply, whereupon the sentry promptly fired at him! Fortunately, however, the bullet just missed him, and shattered itself on the rocks of the kopje, near where Captain Colvin was waiting. Soon after this narrow escape, Lieutenant Magniac was out one day patrolling with half-a-dozen men of his troop, when nine mounted Boers were spotted, who were reconnoitring the outposts and defences of Bloemfontein. The patrol immediately gave chase, and an exciting hunt ensued, but the Boers had too long a start, and managed to get clean away.

On July 6th a patrol from 76th Company rode out to Kornspruit, the place near Sanna's Post where the Boers ambushed our forces returning from Thaba Nchu on March 30th. Numbers of dead horses were still to be seen lying in heaps where they were shot, as they hauled the guns on that disastrous day. All the hoofs of the horses belonging to Q Battery, which did so splendidly, had been removed by trophy hunters. To quote the words of Sir A. Conan Doyle, in his account of this action:—"It was for Q Battery to cover the retreat of the force, and most nobly it did it. A fortnight later a pile of horses visible many hundreds of yards across the plain, showed where the guns had stood." Some old cartridges and pieces of shell were picked up by the patrol, and kept as mementoes. It was rather curious that just at the time that the patrol happened to be looking at the scene of the disaster, a Battery of Artillery approached the spruit, under the escort of 78th Company. Some of the patrol immediately pretended to be Boers,

and tried to take up a position along the spruit, so as to ambush the Battery. However, they were quickly spotted by 78th Company, who gave chase and pursued them for some distance, before they discovered that it was their comrades of 76th Company who were playing this trick, and testing their vigilance as scouts.

A few days after this incident two horses saddled up and linked together, dashed at full gallop into Lawton's camp, where they were annexed by the Company. It could never be found where they came from, but they both looked almost starved. One of the saddles belonged to Q Battery, R.H.A., so the probability is that they had been captured by the Boers at Sanna's Post and had recently broken away from a Boer patrol which was evidently in the neighbourhood spying out the land.

Occasionally, out on the patrol, Spring Buck were met with, when an exciting chase took place, part of the patrol galloping to gain a position, while the remainder circled round the buck, and drove them on the party lying in wait for them. The buck would then bound back with flying leaps, which fully justified their name. The result of the drive was usually a good savoury pot for the meal the same evening. These gallops did not always take place without accident, as the veldt is full of meir-kat holes. Many falls took place at break-neck speed, but fortunately no serious accident happened. The worst was sustained by Trooper Close, when his horse fell with him, causing him to fracture his collar bone.

On Sunday, July 15th, a Dutchman reported that the telegraph wires had been cut close to his farm, so Church Parade was put off, and a party galloped off to investigate. They found two or three posts broken down, and the farmer's Kaffir boy said that he had seen five or six mounted men riding off. The Boer was in a

great state of fright lest his farm should be burned down, as a proclamation had recently been issued stating that when telegraph wires were found cut, the nearest farm was to be burned. The whole neighbourhood was thoroughly searched, but no trace was found of the men who had done the mischief, except some hoofmarks which led in the direction of a Mr. Kolby's farm. On arrival at the farm, however, Kolby stoutly denied that any mounted men had been that way.

On the way back to camp news was received that a large body of Boers was at Reddersburg. Orders were, therefore, given to the men to hold themselves in readiness for an attack at any moment. A picket was sent out five miles along the Reddersburg road, a man was told off to have his horse saddled all night, ready to gallop off to Bloemfontein at a moment's notice, and all slept with rifles ready, and 100 rounds of ammunition in their bandoliers. No attack was, however, made on the outposts, and some days afterwards it was found that the Boers had passed by, and were marching on towards the south.

To vary the monotony of camp life, sports were held on July 21st. These were a decided success, both officers and men taking part with great enthusiasm.

A very curious incident occurred on August 11th. A high gale of bitterly cold wind was blowing, and just as the men were drawn up on parade after breakfast, a huge cylindrical water tank of corrugated iron, about 4 feet in diameter, and about nine feet high, was observed about half a mile away apparently making straight for the horse lines. A rush was made to stop it, but it came on so fast that there was no time to put anything in its way. It took a straight course for the first horse in the lines, which it caught fairly broadside, and knocked down. The shock sent the huge cylinder up on end, and there

it remained until it was rolled off into a nullah, clear of the camp. The tank had travelled over three miles from some buildings intended for a leper hospital, and had negotiated hills, dongas, wire fences, and rocks, during its race, which ended in the Company's horse lines. Next day, when General Knox came out to inspect the outpost, and was told of the occurrence, he looked rather incredulously at the distant hospital buildings and then at the horse lines. Then, turning to the officer who related it, he said: "When next you tell that story, be sure you have a leper inside the tank!"

About this time there was a great deal of unrest in and around Bloemfontein, owing to the near vicinity of the enemy. The Boers were becoming more active every day, and on August 26th two thousand were reported to be at Thaba Nchu, which is a little beyond Bloemfontein Waterworks, where 78th Company was stationed. This increased activity on the part of the enemy entailed extra work on the outposts. The men were kept constantly under arms, and heliographic messages by day and flash light by night continually transmitted orders and reports backwards and forwards, the long messages in cypher taking a long time to make out.

On September 8th, five of the enemy's scouts were seen quite close to Lawton's Farm, so that night a patrol was sent out to search the country. They visited every farmhouse in the neighbourhood, and turned numbers of Dutchmen out of bed. The poor fellows were terribly frightened, as they did not know what was going to happen. However, no trace of the enemy could be found, and the patrol returned to camp next morning.

On the night of September 13th, some very curious lights were observed out on the veldt by the detachment on Brand Kop, which they took to be Boers signalling.



LIEUTENANT PATTERSON'S TROOP AT LAWTON'S FARM.



LIEUTENANT PATTERSON QUESTIONING NATIVES AS TO THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE BOERS.

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The officers at this outpost had arranged with a friendly farmer that he was to put a lamp in his window and flash a light if anyone was about. On this night the lamp was there, but there was no flash. A patrol was, therefore, sent out to investigate, but they found no one, and flashed back that all was well.

This constant strain and anxiety was beginning to tell on the men, especially as their numbers were so small, and so much had to be done that it was impossible for anyone to get sufficient sleep. The non-commissioned officer in charge of the men could only get one night in seven, while the sentries managed to get a night's sleep in five. In spite of this the men did their work excellently, and no grumbling or complaining of any kind was heard. All were very glad, however, when rumours reached the camp that 76th Company was soon to be relieved, and was to join a "flying column" somewhere in the neighbourhood of Senekal.

By the way, this expression "flying column," was a sad misnomer, though it remained a pet phrase among the military authorities, until it became too absurd to be used any longer. A "flying column" included at this time ox wagons which "flew" at the rapid rate of about two miles an hour! Later on the expression came to mean what the Boers understood by a "Horse Commando," viz.: a body of mounted men without wagons or carts of any description.

A review of 76th Company was to take place before its departure, so drills were held every day in preparation for this. Quite unexpectedly, however, the Company was relieved on September 27th by eighty of the Derby Mounted Infantry, under Colonel Godley, and the Yeomanry were ordered off to the Yeomanry Camp, there to await their transport and further orders.

CHAPTER VI.

ON September 29th the Company was ordered to parade at 3 a.m., and proceed to Sanna's Post, where further orders would be received. Everyone was up soon after 2 o'clock. It was pitch dark, and consequently there was some delay in getting wagons loaded and kits packed, so that it was about 4.30 when the Company finally commenced its march.

The transport consisted of two buck wagons drawn by a team of eight mules each, two ammunition carts drawn by four mules each, and one Cape cart, drawn by a pair of Basuto ponies. The Company halted for an hour at Lynche's Farm, where the horses were watered and fed, and the men had breakfast. The march was then resumed to Sanna's Post, which was reached at about 1.30. Here the Company received orders that they were to halt for a day, and then proceed to Thaba Nchu with two guns. On the following morning, at about 9.30, an order, which should have been received the previous evening, arrived from Colonel Pilcher, the Officer Commanding the troops, Thaba Nchu—Ladybrand line. This communication was to the effect that the Boers had again occupied Dewetsdorp and Wepner with about fifty men each, and that Colonel Pilcher had already despatched a Company of M.I. of the 2nd Bedford Regiment, under Captain Findley, to the relief of Dewetsdorp. Captain Colvin was ordered to despatch an officer and twenty-five men to co-operate with him around that place, while the remainder of the Company were to march

at dawn to Thaba Nchu. On the receipt of this belated order not an instant was lost. Lieutenant Patterson and his troop were despatched immediately to Dewetsdorp, while the rest of the Company trekked off to Thaba Nchu. Captain Colvin and the remainder of the Company had an exceedingly trying march over a rough and dusty track, which is dignified by the high-sounding name of "the main road." A terrific sandstorm was encountered, which became so bad that it was impossible to see even the horses' ears, and much less, of course, any enemy who might be approaching. The Company was, therefore, halted in fighting formation until the worst had blown over. Owing to this delay, and various alarms on the way, it was quite dark when Thaba Nchu was reached.

Thaba Nchu itself proved to be an uninteresting collection of huts and houses dumped down on a dusty plain, encircled by some high mountains, which somewhat relieved the dull dreariness of the village.

The Company had scarcely got into their sandy bivouac when an order was received from Colonel Pilcher for an officer and twenty men to be ready to start at dawn to patrol the country to the N.E., and endeavour to find out the movements of a body of some two hundred Boers who were reported to be trying to break through to the south. Lieutenant Thursby was detailed for this duty. The patrol returned the following evening, October 1st, without having seen anything of the Boers.

At about 4.30 a.m. on October 2nd, the whole Company received an order to saddle up at once and start off up the valley towards Springhaan's Nek. Information had been received that a large party of Boers with three guns had been seen near one of the posts between Ladybrand and Thaba Nchu. A second order arrived soon afterwards, saying that the men were to have breakfast

before setting out, so the start was not such a hurried one after all. The Company took with them two guns of the 76th Battery R.F.A., under Captain Stewart, and proceeded to the head of the valley, a distance of about five miles. Here they were to await further orders. The valley would have formed an excellent place for an ambushade, but there was no sign of Boers anywhere about. Enquiries were made from a small post of the 2nd Bedfords as to whether any of the enemy were in the neighbourhood. They had, however, seen nothing of them, so early in the afternoon the Company returned to camp.

The following day, October 3rd, 76th Company was again sent out. Their orders were to march to Coomissie Poort, and seize and hold this place until some infantry could be sent from Thaba Nchu to relieve them. They started at 2 p.m., and their route lay through the valley again, and on past several outposts held by the 2nd Bedfords. The Company had orders to collect as many entrenching tools as possible from the latter, and this considerably delayed the transport wagons. The mounted men, who were anxious to obtain water for their horses, rode on ahead. The Company had a guide, who did not know the country, and took them a long distance out of the way. Consequently when the transport wagons came along they missed the turning which the mounted men had taken. The latter halted at a store belonging to an Englishman named Warringham. Scouts were sent out in all directions to look for the wagons, but there was no sign of them anywhere, so the men had to turn into their blankets supperless.

Early next morning the missing wagons turned up, after having been to Leuw River Mills, but fortunately they had not met any Boers on the way. Colonel Pilcher

himself came out from Thaba Nchu with some infantry, as he expected there would be fighting, and wished to direct operations in person. 76th Company now headed the little column, and was followed by the two guns and some infantry. It was expected that Coomissie Poort would be held by Boers, but there were none of the enemy to be seen, and the Yeomanry took possession of the pass unopposed. Twenty men were left there on outpost duty, while the remainder of the column bivouacked about two miles away at a place which abounded in snakes and scorpions. Colonel Pilcher took the guns with him back to Thaba Nchu, and on his way saw some Boers, at whom he fired a few rounds. They quickly perceived the smallness of his little force, and chased him back to Warringham's, which he luckily reached without being caught. Here he found Lieut. Thursby and his troop, who had been left behind to do some patrolling.

On October 5th, 76th Company was relieved by about a hundred of the 2nd Gloucester Regiment. Lieutenant Magniac and twenty men were left in the pass to patrol the roads while the remainder returned to Warringham's Store. On the same day the troop which had been dispatched to the relief of Dewetsdorp, under Lieutenant Patterson, also returned. They had had some hard marching, but had seen no fighting, as the Boers had cleared out of Dewetsdorp a couple of hours before their arrival. This troop had a very narrow escape from falling into the hands of Piet Fourie, who was within a few miles with four hundred men and some guns. A supposed peaceable burgher tried to get through the troop to warn the Boer General of the smallness of their numbers. Fortunately, he was suspected, and detained until all danger from Fourie's force was over.

Dewetsdorp was reached after darkness had set in, and the men just lay all night beside their horses in the little market square. At daybreak next morning, Oct. 1st, part of the troop, with some police, patrolled the country as far as Wepner. One man rode into the town, and found that it also had just been evacuated by the Boers. This patrol remained out all that night at Daggafontein Store, and returned to Dewetsdorp the following day.

On October 3rd, a column under General Allen marched in and relieved the Yeomanry and Bedford Mounted Infantry, who immediately prepared to return to Thaba Nchu. Just as the mounted troops were leaving the town, some little excitement was caused by General Allen's A.D.C. riding up to say that the mounted troops would be wanted to surround a kopje some four miles off, on which Boers were reported. All were eager for the fray, but within half an hour another order came to say that the troops would not be required. They, therefore, started for Thaba Nchu, which was reached the same evening. The next afternoon, October 4th, the troop left Thaba Nchu to rejoin the Company at Warringham's, but a bivouac was made that night at Springhaan's Nek, as Boers were reported to be in the neighbourhood, and it was hoped that some would be met with. Nothing happened, however, and the troop rejoined the Company at Warringham's on the following morning.

A rather amusing episode took place about this time, A party was sent out to commandeer horses at a farm not far from Warringham's. The farmer was naturally very angry, and protested vehemently, but no notice was taken of him. When his pretty young daughter, however, came out and began to weep bitterly over her horse

that was being taken, the soft-hearted officer relented, and gave back all the horses!

For a week or so after this a number of different isolated posts had to be held by the Company, to complete the line from Bloemfontein to Basutoland. The patrolling at night amongst so many detached posts was rather difficult and dangerous work, especially as the men were liable to be mistaken for the enemy by their own comrades. One night one of these patrols was shot at by a rather jumpy sentry, and a man (Trooper Butterfield), was hit. The bullet struck the horse's withers, passed through the man's thigh, and out through the saddle.

A noteworthy incident occurred while 76th Company was at Warringham's. Lieutenant Patterson went out one day in the direction of Leuw River Mills, with a small patrol of two men (Trooper Moss and another). On the way information was received that a spy, who had been instrumental in getting a patrol ambushed, might possibly be caught dressed as a woman at a certain farm about eight miles off. The patrol at once set off, and after some little time found themselves on a small rise overlooking the farm. Nothing suspicious could be seen about, so the house was galloped for direct. One man rode hard for the back entrance, while Lieutenant Patterson and Trooper Moss made for the front door. Moss was then ordered to search the house thoroughly. This he did, but could find nothing, and came out saying that there were only three women in the house.

Thinking that they had drawn a blank, the patrol turned to ride home. At the corner of the house, however, a Kaffir was met with, and the officer asked him in Dutch where the man was who was dressed in woman's clothes. He replied, "In the house, Boss." The patrol immediately turned back again, and this time the officer

himself went in, and found three women engaged in domestic work. All wore long gowns and big kappjes. They were ordered out of the house, and as they filed past, their faces were carefully scanned. As the third and last lady walked past she bashfully turned her head away. Lieutenant Patterson immediately caught her by the wrist, and said, "I want to see your face, please." She slowly turned round, and revealed an ashy visage, and by this and the trembling wrist the officer at once recognised this "lady," was the man for whom search was being made. He therefore said sharply, "I want you; come along?" and the prisoner was promptly marched off to the nearest farm, where a horse was obtained for him. The two women then began to weep violently, and begged and prayed that the spy would not be shot out of hand, as they fully expected that he would be.

The man himself, when he found that he was caught, requested to be allowed to change into his male attire, but this request was refused. When a horse was procured he was ordered to mount as he was, and with a trooper on each side of him and the officer behind, he was marched off into camp. He looked exceedingly ludicrous astride in his feminine garments. In this costume he was escorted to Colonel (now General) Pilcher; who sent him on to Bloemfontein still in his woman's dress. Here instead of being shot immediately as a spy he was merely made a prisoner of war, and sent down to Cape Town. Such were our "methods of barbarism!" A few days later another call was made at the farm, to relieve the minds of the two women by informing them that the spy had not been shot. They were very grateful for the news.

On October 9th a patrol of five men (Troopers Ede, Moss, Hawkins, Goddard, and Davis), under the com-

mand of Lieutenant Patterson, was ordered to reconnoitre towards Salisbury, where Boers had been reported. Before setting out this party was cautioned to be particularly careful, as the Boers who had been seen, were said to be dressed in khaki uniform. A British farmer named Glen, who was at this time living for protection at Warringham's, volunteered to guide the party the quickest way over the hills to Salisbury Farm, which was about fifteen miles distant. Just after leaving camp the patrol was joined by Captain Colvin and Captain Stewart, R.F.A., who wished to see the country. After a very hard ride Glen's Farm, which was on the way, was reached, and here some of the horses gave out. Lieutenant Patterson, and Troopers Ede and Hawkins were, therefore, left behind, while the rest of the patrol pushed on to Salisbury, which was some three miles further on. The farmer Glen also remained behind, as Salisbury was now in sight. Captain Colvin arranged with Lieutenant Patterson that they should all meet later on at a small winkel or store about a mile back on the road towards camp.

The jaded horses were accordingly led slowly back to the little store, where the party waited for what seemed an interminable time. As Captain Colvin and the rest of the patrol still did not return, the officer began to grow uneasy. Presently shots were heard, then the noise of flying hoofs, and finally the whole patrol was seen galloping as hard as it possibly could, pursued by a number of Boers, who were dressed, as the party had been warned to expect, in khaki. Glen was at once dispatched to Warringham's to carry news of the event. He departed very willingly and speedily, as he had no desire to be caught by the Boers, who would most probably have shot him if they had found him acting as guide to the patrol. Lieutenant Patterson, with his two

men, then advanced at a gallop to create a diversion in favour of their hard-pressed comrades, by attacking the Boers on the flank.

The tired horses were urged to top speed, and pulled up just short of the crest of a rise overlooking the scene, and within about 400 yards of a stone kraal, which Capt. Stewart and his party were making for. On dismounting and creeping to the top of the hill, the two officers and three men were seen galloping for their lives, the dust being kicked up all round by the spattering bullets fired by the pursuing Boers from horseback. Trooper Davis's horse was shot, and man and horse rolled over. Davis got clear, and crept behind a rock, which protected him for a few moments, until he was able to make a dart for a kopje near by. During his run to this place a bullet went through his puttee. Captain Stewart then galloped back for him under cover of the kopje, took him up behind, and then made once more for the stone kraal, which he safely reached with his double load.

Lieutenant Patterson now tried to attract the attention of the party by waving his hat at them, but the only reply was a volley from his comrades, who mistook him for a Boer. This officer now found himself in a very precarious position, as the Boers had by this time got so close to his little party that he could hear them on the other side of the rise excitedly talking to each other in Dutch. He knew that his presence must be discovered in another moment or two by the advancing Boers, so he ordered Troopers Ede and Hawkins to mount and gallop for an isolated kopje near by. The Boers, however, got to the top of the rise, which they had just left before the kopje was reached, and the flying party was exposed to a severe cross fire from both friend and foe! Hawkins was slightly hit on the hand by a bullet, while Ede's horse turned a somersault just as he got



BOER PRISONERS CAPTURED BY 76TH COMPANY, I.Y.



LOOPHOLED WALLS AT LADYBRAND.



under cover of a friendly fold in the ground. Both, fortunately sprang up again unhurt, and reached the kopje safely with the others. This hill was then held for half an hour or so without any mishap, during which time a vigorous rifle duel was carried on between the party holding the stone kraal and the Boers.

Another party of the enemy was then discovered working its way round the kopje, so as to cut off the retreat of the little party holding it. The order was then given to mount and gallop for camp. The Boers were eluded by dismounting and leading the horses up a precipitous path, which the enemy could not see from their position, and after a hard ride camp was reached at about 10 p.m.

Lieutenant Patterson at once tried to signal news of the situation to Colonel Pilcher, but the signaller on Thaba Nchu Mountain, who should have kept in touch with Warringham's Store, was absent from some cause or other. After hours of fruitless effort to attract his attention, a mounted orderly had to be sent into Thaba Nchu with a dispatch giving Colonel Pilcher an account of the affair.

Next morning instructions were received for Lieut. Patterson to proceed with the whole force, viz., a squadron of Yeomanry, a company of infantry in carts, and two guns, to the relief of Captain Colvin and his party. This force was ordered to co-operate with Colonel Pilcher, who was proceeding with the troops from Thaba Nchu to the same destination.

Colonel Pilcher had received another report from the officer commanding the Orange River Colony Police at Thaba Nchu, saying that he had been out patrolling in the neighbourhood of Salisburg, and had been attacked by some hundreds of Boers with four guns, but had escaped to Thaba Nchu with the loss of some five men.

When about halfway to Salisbury, the force under Lieutenant Patterson was greatly surprised to meet Captain Colvin and the rest of the party all well. They were still more surprised when they found that they were bringing back with them a captured horse, which belonged to the Orange River Colony Police!

Some unkind people say that the Yeomanry must have been fighting the police all the time! Some of the Orange River Colony Police may possibly have been mixed up in the fight, but there is no doubt whatever that a number of Boers were there also. These may, perhaps, have retired gracefully, so as to allow the two British parties free scope to exterminate each other! It is quite probable also that none of the Orange River Colony Police took part in the fight, and that the captured horse was one which had been taken by the Boers in a previous encounter with the Police. The mystery has never been satisfactorily solved to this day.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON the day following the encounter at Salisburg Farm, three companies of the 2nd Batt. Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), arrived at Warringham's, and 76th Company was ordered to march with them to Ladybrand, under the command of Colonel Carthew-Yorstoun. Accordingly, as soon as kit was packed, and horses saddled, the little column set out, halting at Leuw River Mills, where it was joined by the remainder of the Black Watch.

Next day, October 11th, the force marched ten miles and camped near the spot occupied by the Company on Oct. 4th, and which was again found to be full of snakes and scorpions. The men rolled themselves tightly up in their blankets and slept soundly, regardless of possible intruders. The march to Ladybrand was resumed in the morning. Lieutenant Pelly and his troop made a little detour to escort a wagon of supplies to Coomissie Poort. He then rejoined the column, which marched over the Platberg, and reached its destination in the evening (October 12th).

Ladybrand was found to be a very pretty little Dutch village nestling amidst green trees at the foot of the Platberg, which encircled it on three sides. In the distance, a mile or two away, could be seen the Caledon River, on the borders of Basutoland. In the centre of the town was a market square, in which stood a nice stone church, with a tall spire. There was also a fairly good hotel.

76th Company was to share the mounted work around Ladybrand, with Driscoll's Scouts, and some of the Orange River Police. There were about eighty of Driscoll's Scouts under Captain Davis; these had been holding Ficksburg, but were obliged to evacuate it on the approach of a large force of Boers. They then crossed the Caledon River, marched down nearly to Maseru, and reached Ladybrand a few days after 76th Company arrived. These mounted troops, together with the Black Watch and two guns, formed the whole garrison of Ladybrand, which was under the command of Colonel Carthew-Yorstoun.

On the day following their arrival, 76th Company was sent out with some of the Black Watch to catch about twenty Boers, who were reported to be on a kopje near Modder Poort. The Black Watch went out in a wagon, and took up a position near the scene of action. The mounted troops were then divided; a part were to go round the flanks, while the others were to ride straight for the kopje. This was carried out, but after a swift gallop up to and around the flanks of the position nothing was found, and no signs of Boers were visible anywhere. The attacking party then drew up at the garden wall of a Monastery, which had established itself in this out-of-the-way place. This proved to be the Brotherhood of St. Augustine, Modder Poort, which since the war has been transferred to the Society of the Sacred Mission, Kelham, Newark-on-Trent. The Reverend Father was most kind and hospitable and invited the officers in to lunch. The retreat only contained two Fathers and two Brothers. In the evening the party returned to camp, feeling rather disappointed at not having found any Boers. The next few days were spent in posting and entrenching the five detached outposts which were furnished by the Yeomanry.



TROOPER WILMOTT'S GRAVE.

On October 19th, 76th Company was moved from its bivouac on the veldt to four small partly furnished houses in the town, which had been selected by Captain Colvin. They were brick built structures, with a thin tin roof, having a verandah or "stoep" in front. The horses were picketed in the gardens belonging to these houses for greater security in case of attack.

During the week which followed, a sad event took place. Trooper Wilmott, of 76th Company, who had for some time been dangerously ill of enteric fever, died early on the morning of October 25th. He had been Lieut. Pelly's groom, and was a very good fellow. He left a wife and child in England. His funeral took place in the afternoon with full military honours; the Artillery lent a gun carriage; the Black Watch sent their pipers and provided a firing party, while Lieutenant Pelly's black horse, which had been Wilmott's favourite, was led behind the body, with the reins twisted with white ribbons, a black pall over the saddle, and the dead man's boots reversed in the stirrups. Wilmott was buried at the edge of the Military Cemetery just below the Platberg, and two beautiful wreaths were placed on his grave, one from 76th Company, and one from the Hospital Staff and the nursing sister, Nurse Underwood. This lady, for her untiring devotion to the sick and wounded at Ladybrand, was subsequently decorated with the order of the Royal Red Cross.

About this time a number of horses arrived from Basutoland for the Black Watch, as the Colonel wished to form a Mounted Infantry Company to assist the Yeomanry and Driscoll's Scouts in clearing the surrounding district of Boers.

A large commando of the enemy were reported to be at Ficksburg, which was the next town to Ladybrand, and about thirty miles distant. The mountainous

districts round this town were a favourite haunt of the Boers, as they formed an excellent retreat for a tired and exhausted commando. Det Wet several times took refuge here, and when once he succeeded in gaining the shelter of the friendly kopjes, it was almost impossible to dislodge him. The country around was also very fertile, and Ladybrand was the centre of one of the richest grain growing districts in the Orange River Colony.

The information that the enemy were at Ficksburg caused the garrison at Ladybrand to become still more on the alert, and extra precautions were taken for the safety of the town in case of attack. Every street was blocked with wire entanglements, and some had walls and ditches across them. All the houses and walls were loop-holed, and the garrison stood to arms every morning from 3.45 to 5.30. Yet, in the midst of all these warlike preparations, and in spite of the constant expectation of an attack at any moment, the drums and pipes of the Highlanders played merrily in the square two or three times a week. Concerts were held, and those who were not on duty, and had been allotted houses, slept with windows and doors open, feeling as secure as if they had been in their own comfortable beds in England.

On November 5th a patrol of 76th Company went out a long distance, and made a round of all the farms in the neighbourhood. It was found that at least four out of every five of these had some one or other of the family, a prisoner in the hands of the British. All seemed to be very tired of the war, and longed heartily for it to be over.

At one farm the Dutch family were most kind and hospitable, and invited the officers to lunch. They were very well-to-do people, with a well-furnished house. The head of the house and two of the sons were prisoners of war. During the lunch, Miss Van Heerden chaffingly

remarked that this would be a good opportunity for the Boers to come and catch the British officers. However, they were not at all anxious for any further fighting round their house, as it had already been the centre of a fight, and Miss Van Heerden went on to relate how on that occasion a shell came through the top of the front door, while almost every square foot of the house was spattered with shrapnel. A bullet was still seen embedded in the drawing room door. Mrs. Van Heerden and her daughter had a marvellous escape, as they were standing at the door at the time, with their little Kaffir girl, watching the troops approach. Suddenly, without any warning, the guns opened fire, and the shrapnel burst a few yards off. Three of the bullets struck poor little Marta, the Kaffir child. Mrs. Van Heerden and her daughter hurriedly picked her up, and fled for safety to a donga behind the house. The little Kaffir girl, fortunately, recovered, except for a slight lameness, and on the present occasion waited at table during the lunch.

Soon after this visit, on November 13th, six Boers were reported to be at a farm close to Ladybrand, and a patrol of 76th Company was therefore at once sent out. They searched the place thoroughly, but finding no trace of the men, returned to camp. Next day, information came in that just after the patrol had left, three Boers came out of their rocky hiding places on a kopje near by, and went down into the farm, telling the inmates that they were tired of the war, and intended to give themselves up. This proved to be quite correct, for on the 15th the three men came in to Ladybrand and surrendered.

Another patrol went out to Leuw River Mills on November 20th. Here they learned from the wife of the manager that a Boer Commando, under General Hasebroek, had passed near Ladybrand, marching north.

On their way they had called at Leuw River Mills, and had taken two hundred pounds worth of stores away with them, besides forty horses.

A few days afterwards, on November 30th, a number of Boers were reported to be in the neighbourhood of Clocolan, which is a little village to the north-east of Ladybrand, consisting of a store with a few houses built round it. All available men of 76th Company were, therefore, mustered, and sent out with Captain Colvin to reconnoitre in that direction. Lieutenant Magniac with a scouting party, was sent on in advance. His left flank group of four pushed on too far ahead, and lost touch with the others. When they got close to a farm called Vrolykheid, owned by a Mr. Radloff, they were suddenly fired on by some Boers who were lying concealed among the stones of a kopje. Lieutenant Magniac, with the rest of the scouting party, quickly followed, and when they got up to this point, they also came under a sharp fire. They, therefore, galloped for cover to a donga, where all the horses were concealed.

Meanwhile, Captain Colvin, with the remainder of his men, took up a position on a kopje, where they remained watching developments. It was considered that owing to want of ammunition, the little party was too weak to attempt to turn the Boers out of their position, so a galloper was sent to Lieutenant Magniac, ordering him to withdraw to the main body, under cover of the donga. On his arrival he informed Captain Colvin that four of his men had pushed too far to the front, and had fallen into the hands of the Boers. The Company was naturally very anxious to know the fate of their missing comrades, a note was therefore written to Mrs. Radloff, asking for information, and a Kaffir woman was sent off with this hidden in her skirts. She worked her way skilfully under cover to the farm,

delivered the note, and brought back a reply. This was to the effect that Sergeant Dearle had been very severely wounded and brought into her house, and that the other three men were prisoners.

The party then returned to Ladybrand, and sent out a doctor and a nurse at once to do all that was possible for Sergeant Dearle. The poor fellow had, however, been mortally wounded, and died the following morning, in spite of all the care with which he was nursed by Mrs. Radloff and her daughter.

On this same day the Orange River Colony Police had a brush, with the Boers, at a place some four miles to the left of Vrolykheid. In this encounter Lieutenant Dobbie, commanding the Ladybrand Police, was killed, and three of his men were severely wounded.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE Boers were gathering in numbers, and became very active around Ladybrand. An attack was expected at any moment, so all outposts were doubled, and patrols constantly sent out. The weather at this time was exceedingly bad, and the men on outpost duty and in the trenches had a very poor time of it, as they were drenched through again and again.

Lieutenant Patterson, accompanied by a Basuto Scout, was out reconnoitring one day on the top of the Platberg, when he saw two suspicious looking horsemen in long cloaks and slouch hats go into a farmhouse below. He left his horse with the scout on the top of the hill, and stalked down behind rocks to a good position right above the farm. He then fired one or two shots over the house, whereupon four Dutchmen came out. Another shot made them put up their hands and take out their handkerchiefs as a white flag. Not knowing how many more there might be in the house, he beckoned them to come up to him. When they got a little way up the hill, he halted them, and made one advance alone. As soon as this man got within speaking distance he was ordered to sit down, as the officer did not wish him to see that he was alone. The man at first refused, but when he was informed that he would be shot instantly unless he did as he was told, he obeyed. A parley then took place, and the man explained that he and his companions were Boer refugees, living in Basutoland. They had obtained passes for the day to visit their wives

and farms, and were now on their way back to Maseru. The black scout was ordered to tie up the horses, and go down to the farm to bring up the passes for inspection, and these were found to be correct.

On December 8th, No. 3 outpost reported Boers in the neighbourhood. About a dozen Dutchmen rode up and sniped at the trenches of the Black Watch above Modder Poort, from a range of about 2,000 yards, probably to ascertain the strength of the picket. After firing for some time they rode off, perhaps expecting that a mounted force would follow, and be drawn into an ambush prepared for them. However, if that was their object, they did not succeed.

A few days after this, on December 11th, a foraging party of Driscoll's Scouts with twenty of the Black Watch in wagons, were ordered to go through a bad piece of country, which was infested with Boers, to a farm, where a lot of forage was to be had. Driscoll's Scouts arrived at the farm first, and took up a good position. When the wagon with the infantry came into sight, about fifty Boers suddenly appeared, who evidently meant to dispute their passage, and prevent the forage being taken away. The Boers made for a kopje, which was behind Driscoll's flank, but when they came near they found it was already occupied by four of Driscoll's men, who opened a sharp fire on them. One man was killed, and another wounded, and the rest were forced to retire. As soon as news of the fighting reached Ladybrand, 76th Company went out to the rescue, but met the party returning home quite safely.

On the following day, December 12th, Lieutenant Pelly was sent with a Cape cart and two natives into Bloemfontein, a distance of ninety miles. There were numbers of Boers about, and the roads were very rough. De Wet, with a force of over 2,000 men, was in the

neighbourhood of Warringham's, and an attack there was expected at any moment. Colonel Thorneycroft, with a force of five hundred men, was lying in wait for him about three miles out. The little Cape cart, however, managed to make its way unmolested to Bloemfontein by way of Warringham's, Thaba Nchu, Israel's Port, Sanna's Post, and Boeshman's Kop. On his way back, Lieutenant Pelly met Colonel Williams' column, and learned from them that soon after he had passed Warringham's, De Wet, with about 4,000 men, had fallen upon the post, which Colonel Thorneycroft had just entrenched. The Boers received a very warm reception, and were forced to withdraw, hotly pursued by Colonel Thorneycroft's force. As, however, he had only five hundred men against 4,000, he dared not follow too far, and De Wet managed to break through the post at Springhaan's Nek, and make his retreat to the mountainous districts around Ficksburg, losing two guns, a large amount of ammunition, a few wagons, and forty prisoners.

Colonel Pilcher's column, which was engaged in chasing De Wet, marched through Ladybrand about this time, and 76th Company proceeded for some distance with the force. A few miles out of Ladybrand about sixty Boers were spotted on a kopje. Lieutenant Patterson was ordered to guide some of the Mounted Infantry, and get round the kopje, to cut off the enemy's retreat, while the others attacked in front. The Mounted Infantry, however, moved so slowly that the Boers escaped before the party could get round. While this party was with Colonel Pilcher's column, the Captain of De Wet's despatch riders came in under a flag of truce. As he had seen the position of the column and its strength, he was not allowed to return immediately, but was brought blindfold into Ladybrand by 76th Company.

He was of German nationality, and said he was tired of the war, and wished to give himself up; he was, therefore, sent down to Cape Town as a prisoner.

On December 21st, 76th Company was ordered out with all the carts they could muster, to the farm of a man who had broken his parole. All the live stock was cleared off, and the women were brought in to Ladybrand, and sent on to Bloemfontein.

On Christmas Eve 76th Company and Driscoll's Scouts were despatched to carry out the various sentences passed by the District Commissioner, at the farms of those who had broken their parole. This was not a very pleasant duty, especially at a time when one would like to see peace and goodwill prevailing throughout the world. However, it was absolutely necessary that those Boers who had broken their word should be punished, and if this had been more strictly carried out from the beginning, the war would probably have been over much sooner. Three or four different farms were visited, and at each the sentence passed by the Commissioner was carried out. All live stock was collected and driven off, and in some cases furniture, cooking utensils, etc., were also destroyed, in case the Boers might return and find these useful. At some of the farms the women folk were very impertinent, but at one farm the poor vrouw was in tears, and begged so hard that she might keep some of the cattle, that the Commissioner relented, and gave her back five cows. All the confiscated stock was taken on to Mequatling's Farm, where most of the party remained for the night. They had ridden thirty-six miles during the day, and Ladybrand was eighteen or twenty miles distant. Most of the carts were sent on with an escort. An uneasy night was spent at Mequatling's Farm, as an attack was expected at any moment, and the noise made by the captured cattle was

not conducive to slumber. About midnight a shot was heard, but this turned out to be a cartridge, which had been placed on the fire in mistake by a Kaffir. A very early start was made in the morning, and a kopje which commanded the farm was seized before dawn. Ladybrand was reached at 8.30 on Christmas morning. After breakfast, plum puddings, rum, and cigarettes were served out to the men, and many other unaccustomed luxuries were enjoyed, which had been sent out by kind friends at home. The English mail had arrived most opportunely, bringing home letters, and many seasonable remembrances for both officers and men.

On December 27th, 76th Company, Driscoll's Scouts, and about fifteen men of the Black Watch Mounted Infantry, left camp in the afternoon to visit farms. The first halt was made at the house of a Dutchman, who had given his parole, and persisted in keeping to it, in spite of the efforts made by the Boers to make him break it. It was found, however, that his house had been wrecked by the Boers, and the man himself was nowhere to be seen.

The next halt was at the house of M. Steyn, brother of the late President of the Orange Free State. This man had died a couple of months previously, leaving no will, so that all his goods fell into the enemy's hands. His nephew had broken his parole and rejoined his commando, leaving most of his things behind him, including a Gladstone bag, which was full of clothes. An almost new buggy was also found. A mill was next visited, and the working parts destroyed, so that the Boers would not be able to grind their wheat. The force then bivouacked for the night at Mequatling's Farm. A message was received from the Colonel of the Black Watch that there was a party of two hundred Boers in the neighbourhood; consequently, extra pickets had to be put out.

The following day the party visited the farm of a man called Besters, who had broken his parole, and was out fighting again with three or four sons. All his stock was rounded up and carried off. The family would also have been moved, but there were no wagons available, so they had to be left there for the present, but were told that the farm was confiscated.

The force bivouacked again at Mequatling's Farm, and a very early start was made on December 29th. A visit was paid to the farm of a man called Eckstine, who had also broken his parole. All the live stock was confiscated, and the family were given half an hour to collect and pack up anything they wished to take with them. They were then sent in wagons into Ladybrand, while the remainder of the things at the farm were destroyed. The night was again passed at Mequatling's Farm, and on the following day, December 30th, the whole force returned to Ladybrand.

CHAPTER XIX.

1901 **T**HE New Year and New Century commenced very quietly at Ladybrand. Sports were held at Maseru on January 1st, and were attended by some of the officers.

On January 3rd two men of the Ulster I.Y., and one of Strathcona's Horse, who had been sent back from Colonel Pilcher's column, lost their way, and came in to Ladybrand. They were attached to 76th Company.

On the following day, January 4th, a force of thirty Yeomanry, thirty-two Driscoll's Scouts, and fifteen Black Watch Mounted Infantry, were sent out on another foraging and farm-stripping expedition. A number of farms were visited belonging to people who had either broken their parole, or who had harboured and fed Boers, and all the cattle and sheep were driven off. The force then collected everything together at the farm of an Englishman called Ingwell, and the night was passed here. In the morning it was found that some of the captured cows had already breakfasted off a bridle and reins, and some saddle girths! These had been the property of one of 76th Company's officers. The party then returned to Ladybrand.

On January 10th those of 76th Company who were not on outpost duty or patrols, were congratulating themselves on having an easy day, and the men seized the opportunity to have a general clean up. Baths were indulged in, and shaving and haircutting were busily going on, when suddenly an order came to saddle up

immediately. A report had come in that some Boers were lying in wait on a kopje, ready to attack a convoy which was trekking from Maseru to Coomissie, and a force was to be sent out at once to frustrate their plans. All available men of 76th Company and Driscoll's Scouts set out without delay, under the command of Lieutenant Pelly. As soon as the top of the Platberg was reached the dust of the convoy could be seen about three miles off approaching the kopje where the Boers were said to be lying in ambush. The party started off at a canter, 76th Company going to the left of the kopje, and Driscoll's to the right. The kopje was rounded, and the convoy met, but not a single Boer was seen. Probably they thought it best not to show themselves, as their plan had been discovered. The whole force bivouacked at Coomissie. The night was intensely dark, causing men and horses to stumble into wire fences, and a good deal of confusion to take place. A tremendous thunderstorm then broke over the bivouac, drenching everyone to the skin. Next morning, after a hasty meal, 76th Company and Driscoll's Scouts left the convoy safe at Coomissie, and returned to Ladybrand.

On the following day, January 12th, a body of Boers were reported to have been seen by one of the outposts. In consequence of this information, 76th Company and Driscoll's set out at midnight, under the command of Captain Colvin, to lie in wait for them along a spruit which they were known to be in the habit of passing through. The expedition was not successful, however, and five hours of lying in a wet ditch was enough to damp the ardour even of a Yeoman. At 8.30 Captain Colvin decided to return to Ladybrand. Some Boers, who were stationed on a kopje opposite, must, no doubt, have warned their comrades of the trap prepared for them.

A few days quiet followed this midnight expedition, but on January 18th, 76th Company, Driscoll's Scouts, and the Black Watch were unexpectedly paraded at 4 a.m. As they waited in the intense darkness before dawn of an exceedingly cold morning wondering what was going to happen, it became known that the troops were to act on this occasion as Knight Errants, and that the object of the expedition was to rescue a damsel who had been carried off by the Boers! This young lady was a Miss Orlachs, who was engaged to Dr. Fourie, son of Commandant Fourie. The authorities in the town decided that the troops should make an attempt to recover her. The Yeomen, therefore, rode off to the rescue. Numbers of farms were visited, and the owners plied with questions. Search was made in every direction, and enquiries prosecuted on all sides, but still no trace could be discovered of the missing lady. At one place information was received that two Boers were at a farm at the foot of the Vier Voet, which was a flat-topped mountain or table land, separated from the Platberg by a narrow valley, and about an hour's journey further on. Accordingly, two black scouts were sent on ahead to creep up to the house unobserved. This they did with their usual dexterity, and immediately one came galloping back, while the other remained concealed. It was evident that something had been discovered; so, without any delay, the whole party dashed up to the farm. They arrived just in time to see three men rush out of the house, and make for the hills at the back, without waiting to mount their horses, which were left standing at the farm. Captain Davis, of Driscoll's, and Lieutenant Pelly, of 76th Company, with three troopers, made straight for the house, while the rest of the party, under Lieutenant Mackenzie, of Driscoll's, set off in pursuit of the three men.

Of course, the women at the farm, as usual, stoutly denied that any Boers had been there. However, every nook and corner in the house was thoroughly searched, and in one room a bed had just been vacated, while on the floor lay a pair of spurs and some cartridges. Just as the lady of the house was about to be accused of harbouring the enemy on this damning evidence a shot rang out on the hill, followed by a loud cry, and immediately the party at the farm rushed out to join their comrades.

Meanwhile the three fugitives had run for their lives up a rough, stony path, on the rocky and bush-covered kopje, closely followed by their pursuers. A chance shot, fired by one of Driscoll's Scouts, rebounded off a rock, and struck one of the Boers on the ankle, bringing him down, and causing him to lose a great deal of blood, although the wound was not a serious one. It was quickly bound up, and the man placed on a horse, brought down the hill, and sent off under escort with two captured horses and a rifle. While this was going on the chase after the other two Boers was continued. One of these, in his haste to get out of the house before the British were upon him, had rushed out without donning his trousers, and looked most ludicrous in his scanty attire. He was very fleet footed, however, and managed to hide among the rocks and bushes, and escape unhurt, in spite of the many shots which were fired after him. The third man was captured after a short run. The two prisoners were brothers named Vryburg, who had for a long time been spying about in the neighbourhood of Ladybrand. The elder one had served in the Free State Artillery.

All the cattle, sheep, and goats on the farm were then collected together, and the party were just preparing to start for Ladybrand, when five strange horsemen were

suddenly observed riding along quite leisurely towards the farm. At first it was thought that they were black scouts, or else some of the English party, which was still rather scattered after the cattle clearing. Six of the Black Watch were sent forward to make sure. These galloped off, and soon found the horsemen to be a party of unwary Boers—a thing which was most unusual, and almost unknown. How they failed to notice the comparatively large English party was most extraordinary.

76th Company then joined in the pursuit, but the Boers had a long start and excellent horses, so they gained ground rapidly. Still the chase was kept up for over three miles until the burghers got into some very broken country, where they could lie concealed, and pick off their pursuers without the latter having any cover whatever. The pursuit was therefore abandoned, and it was decided that it would be a good thing to clear the Vier Voet of all Boer families. It was arranged that a force should be left all night on a commanding position on the hill to hold the country until a party should come out next day from Ladybrand to clear the farms. This would save the horses the ten miles to Ladybrand. Most of Driscoll's Scouts, the Black Watch, and ten men of 76th Company were, therefore, left behind, under Lieutenant Mackenzie, while the remainder returned to Ladybrand. The enemy, who were ever on the look out for stragglers and weak parties, made an attack on Mackenzie's force at dusk, but were repulsed.

Colonel Carthew-Yorstoun did not like the idea of this detachment being left out all night, so those who returned to Ladybrand were paraded at 3 a.m., and sent out again in rain and inky darkness. It was impossible to see anything, but they managed to come into touch with Mackenzie's

Scouts before dawn. On the way out Captain Davis and Lieutenant Magniac called at the Olricks' farm to see if there was any sign of the missing girl, but nothing had been heard of her. As the party approached the Vier Voet they met about twenty of the Black Watch, who were on the look out for them. The native scouts were then sent on ahead to see that everything was clear. Just as the party reached the foot of the hill, a tremendous fusillade began at the top. Captain Davis gave the order to advance as quickly as possible, and up the steep rocky mountain path the whole party galloped at full speed. On reaching the top it was found that the firing was that of Mackenzie's contingent at five Boers who were leaving a farm near the head of the path. The fusillade so frightened the native scouts that some of these bolted, and thus drew on themselves the fire of Mackenzie's men, who mistook them for Boers. One poor fellow named Edward (Lieutenant Pelly's "boy,") was hit in the ribs just below the right lung. The bullet passed through the bandolier, and hit two of the cartridges, fortunately without exploding them. The firing soon ceased on the arrival of the newcomers, and some mule wagons were then brought up the hill, as it was intended to clear the place of all Boer families and cattle. Before operations were commenced, Mackenzie's men had supper and breakfast in one.

The force then proceeded to clear all the farms on the hill, which was in reality a broad tableland. They commenced by collecting together all the families, and placing them near the top of the path which led down to "Paradise" Farm, where the two burghers had been captured the previous day. This proved to be a mistake, as it showed the Boers the path by which the British intended to retire, and they laid their plans accordingly. The Black Watch were then left to hold this strong posi-

tion, while their mounted infantry were placed in another commanding position, from which they had full view of the country all round. Some of these had orders to go to the nearest farms and destroy all the grain by scattering it on the ground. The rest of the commandeering party went on with the mule wagons to Van Zyls Farm, where 76th Company remained, while Driscoll's Scouts went on still further to the next house.

A party of Boers who had been hovering about all the time now appeared near Van Zyls Farm, and manœuvred about in the open, evidently trying to draw the Yeomanry after them. This ruse, however, did not succeed. When the Boers realised that they could not entice 76th Company away from its farm clearing, they started a worrying fire from a distance of about 2,000 yards. For a time the bullets fell thick and fast, singing over the house and around the walls, but not a man or horse was hit. The work of farm clearing was successfully carried out, the families brought away, and the whole force retired safely on to the position occupied by the Black Watch M.I. The Mounted Infantry were then ordered to fire at the place where the snipers lay concealed, while 76th Company and Driscoll's Scouts retired with the wagons to the top of the steep path which led down the hill side. On the way the party caught sight of the Boers, and directed a very heavy rifle fire at them, the result of which was, of course, unknown. The wagons were then started on the homeward way to Ladybrand. They were accompanied by the Black Watch, with all their looted poultry. One man marched along with five live quacking ducks hanging by their legs to his rifle barrel!

The mounted men had more work to accomplish. A detachment had been left behind on a rise to cover the retreat of the Black Watch M.I. to the top of the path.

As soon as these vacated their strong position it was instantly seized by the Boers, who now began a lively fire. It was, however, when the mounted men started to retire from the hill that their real difficulties began. The place called "Paradise Farm," at the foot of the high cliff, had still to be cleared, and the family brought away. Driscoll's men and ten of the 76th Company, with the Black Watch Mounted Infantry, made their way down the rough and precipitous path to carry out this work.

The moment these troops moved off a Boer sentry lit up a smoke signal to warn the Boers that the British were abandoning their strong position. Instantly, a number of burghers galloped out from all kinds of unexpected places, where they had been lying in wait. Mackenzie, from his vantage point, opened a well-directed fire on them, preventing them from gaining the cliffs, and forcing them to take refuge in a Kaffir Kraal. He sent down word that his position was becoming untenable, and that the farm must be cleared as quickly as possible. His respite proved to be a very short one, and there was only just time for the commandeering party to bring the family away from the farm, when more Boers appeared, and being hard pressed on all sides he was forced to retire. This he did by sending his men away in small numbers at a time, while he himself kept the Boers busy, finally slipping away with the last lot by another path. These last few men were very hard-pressed and nearly cornered in getting away. Two had to abandon their horses and scramble down a path where no horse could possibly go. Their comrades in the farm below were able, to a certain extent, to cover their descent by keeping up a brisk fire, but when all were safely down, the farm had to be hastily abandoned, as the fire from the cliffs above became so hot and determined that that place, too, became untenable.

As Mackenzie and a few men were still missing the party made a circling tour round the kopje determined to force their way up again to cover the retreat of the missing men. On their way they came across two of Driscoll's Scouts busily engaged with the Boers, and covering the descent of a third man, who was the last to get away. These two had had very narrow escapes. A bullet grazed the temple of one, covering his face with blood. A blue mark had been traced by a bullet right across the stomach of the other man without breaking the skin! The rest of the missing men had now turned up, and the whole contingent came out of the fight minus four horses, but without the loss of a single man.

The Boers had fought hard, and shown great determination. They were naturally very angry at seeing their families carried off before their eyes, and had done their best to rescue them. Their plans had evidently been laid overnight, but were frustrated. The expedition was carried out most successfully by the British, and the whole party reached Ladybrand about 7.30 in the evening, after being in the saddle since 3.30 a.m. A few days afterwards it was heard that the Boers had lost four men in this affray.

CHAPTER XX.

THE sad news of the serious illness of the Queen reached Ladybrand on Tuesday, January 22nd, and on the following day her death was announced. This news was received by all with the deepest sorrow and regret.

On January 24th, a big convoy was due to arrive at Ladybrand, and as an attack on it was anticipated, all available mounted men were sent out at 4 o'clock in the morning to scout the country and frustrate the attempt. This was successfully accomplished, and the convoy brought in safely. Another large convoy left Ladybrand on January 28th, taking away all the Boer women and children who had been brought in from the farms, and it was thought that the Boers would make a big effort to rescue them. Again all the mounted men were sent out at an early hour in the morning, while a 15-pounder was posted to command the valley along which the convoy passed. There was no trouble of any kind, and the force returned to Ladybrand in the evening.

Captain Colvin left Ladybrand the following day for Bloemfontein, and much to the regret of the Company did not rejoin them until May 15th, when all met at Cape Town to embark for home. In the meantime, after having been in hospital for a month, he was appointed Commandant of the I.Y. Base Depôt at Cape Town.

An interesting ceremony took place in the Town Hall, Ladybrand, on January 29th, when the Mayor read an address of sympathy on the death of the Queen. A

letter signed by the farmer burghers who had been fighting, but were now on parole, was also read, acknowledging themselves to be loyal subjects of the King. A still more remarkable ceremony took place at Maseru, in Basutoland, on January 31st, when a meeting of the Basuto Chiefs was held, in order to have the Proclamation of the Accession of the King read out to them. Many of the dusky Chiefs made long speeches, giving expression to the most loyal sentiments. During the course of his address, one of these said, "When the great Queen Mother took over the protection of our land we were only naked savages, but now we are gentlemen and wear white collars!"

On February 1st, more work occurred for the mounted men. A large party of Boers had trekked during the night to break through Klip Nek, near Coomissie Poort. Sixty succeeded in this, but the remainder, about fifty, were turned back by the Black Watch, who were holding the Nek, and forced to abandon twenty horses. All mounted troops were, therefore, sent out at once from Ladybrand, to try to intercept these men. The party rode for a very long distance without seeing or hearing any of them. At last, what appeared to be reliable information, was received that about forty Boers had gone to a farm called "Marseilles." The mounted party quickly took up a position on a kopje overlooking this farm. The glasses were turned on to it, and several horses were seen, then some men appeared, so it was decided to rush the place without losing any time.

A plan was quickly drawn up. One party of the 76th Company was sent round by a circuitous route to the back of the farm, to cut off all retreat in that direction, while the rest of the Yeomanry went to the left of the farm, and the Black Watch, M.I., to the right. When

all was ready a simultaneous attack was made on the three sides. It was found, however, that no Boers were there, and that the farm only contained seven Kaffir "boys," who were engaged in rounding up cattle for the British. After enjoying some milk and bread, which were, after all, more acceptable than bullets, the party returned to Ladybrand, having ridden over forty miles. On their way, they passed close to "Paradise Farm," the scene of the last encounter with the Boers. As they cantered at a brisk pace up to the outposts held by the Black Watch, they were surprised to see the Highlanders pouring into the trenches, and soon the unmistakable click of the Lee-Metford bolt was heard as the rifles were got ready for action. To avoid any mistake, the returning party slowed down to a walk, and the threatening rifles of the Black Watch were at once lowered. It turned out that Colonel Carthew-Yorstoun had received a report that three hundred Boers were in possession of "Paradise" Farm, and as he knew that the returning party must pass that way he was very anxious for their safety. It was feared that they had been captured, and that the approaching troopers were Boers.

All Ladybrand was found to be in a state of great excitement. Everyone was under arms all night. The town guard was armed, and the half Company on the far side of the Platberg was withdrawn, leaving only one or two men of 76th Company in their place. No attack, however, was made during the night, the town gradually became calmer, and settled down again to its normal aspect.

February 2nd was the day of the Queen's funeral. An imposing ceremony took place in the market square. All the troops were drawn up on parade, and the proclamation announcing the accession of King Edward VII. was read out. The Royal Ensign was

then hoisted. Afterwards the ladies of the town presented an address of sympathy on the death of the Queen, which was acknowledged by the Colonel, and a Memorial Service was held in Ladybrand Church in the afternoon.

On February 6th Lieutenant Patterson, with two men (Sergeant Payne and Trooper Murphy) was sent out about twenty miles on a reconnoitring expedition. The little party had a most exciting day. They first saw two Boers hastily depart from a farm, leaving two horses behind them. Without allowing themselves to be seen, the three cautiously stole up to the farm and seized the two horses. They then proceeded to search the house, the inhabitants of which were under the belief that the place was surrounded by British troops. When they had searched in all the rooms and were about to enter the loft, the report of a rifle rang out from a kopje near by, whereupon the little party, having seen all they wanted, thought it was time to clear with the two captured horses. Afterwards a native told them that a man's face appeared at the door of the loft directly they had left.

When they had ridden some little distance they presently caught sight of the two Boers again. Quickly dismounting, the three lay low until the enemy were behind the next rise. They then began to stalk the two Boers, and had arrived about half way to the rise when they found they were perceived. They at once halted, and remained perfectly still, and the enemy evidently took them for their own people, as there were several Boers straggling about. The party then manœuvred warily round, and during this stalk they perceived two more Boers, who were watering their horses. Both sides now made a rush for a kopje, which formed the nearest commanding position. It was a close race, and one of the Boers waved his hat in defiance at the Yeomen, but.

nevertheless, the latter won. Lieutenant Patterson, being well mounted, rode in first, closely followed by his two companions. Flinging themselves off their horses just below the crest line, they opened fire, and a Boer instantly dropped from his saddle, apparently quite dead. Two horses also fell. Fifteen more burghers now appeared on the scene from different directions, and took up a position in a kraal, from which they opened a brisk fire. This was replied to energetically by the little party, and two more of the Boers were wounded. The trio then thought it expedient to get away, if possible, without being seen. Sergeant Payne and Trooper Murphy, with the captured horses, were sent on, while Lieutenant Patterson remained behind to engage the Boers and keep them as long as possible in ignorance of their escape. He then galloped after the others, and was much amused to hear the Boers shooting away at the kopje, while he and his two troopers were riding a couple of miles away. They reached Ladybrand in safety, where they received the congratulations of the Colonel and their comrades.

On the following day, 76th Company was paraded at 5 a.m., and sent out to the Vier Voet Mountain to protect some twelve wagons, while they were loaded up with forage. Lieutenant Mackenzie, with about twenty of Driscoll's Scouts, had been sent out at 2 a.m., in order to get a foothold on the hill before dawn. Unfortunately, in the dark his flank ran right into some Boers who were lying in wait for the night marchers, and two of his men were badly hit, each receiving more than one wound. The detachment had to retire to a position at the S.E. end of the Vier Voet, and were forced to abandon four horses, as they came under a very heavy fire all the way.

As 76th Company approached the hill, they met a messenger from Lieutenant Mackenzie urging them to hurry, as he was hard pressed. A little further on a

second messenger galloped up, who said that Driscoll's had lost four men killed. The Yeomanry galloped quickly forward to the assistance of their comrades, and were met by one of the wounded men, who was being brought down the kopje. A bullet had passed through his neck, just missing the throat, and another had hit the bolt of his rifle and splintered into his arm.

The Boers were now holding the strong position that the Yeomanry had held in the fight on January 19th. The steep path up the hill was a very difficult one to climb, but soon all the men and horses had scrambled up, the latter being hidden behind some rocks, while the men quickly joined Driscoll's, who were firing vigorously from a good position well under cover. With the arrival of 76th Company the pressure round Mackenzie's party slackened. The Boers retired to a kopje some little distance further on, and the situation merged into a long range rifle duel. After about an hour's firing, it was determined to try and approach nearer to the Boers. As soon, however, as the horses showed on the grass, bullets fell so thick and fast around them, that it was decided to leave them behind under cover and approach dismounted. Lieutenant Magniac, with about twenty men, skirmished safely across the first five hundred yards, keeping well under cover, while the remainder of 76th Company kept the Boer fire down by pouring volleys into them whenever they showed themselves. The remainder of the distance was, however, absolutely open ground, and as Lieutenant Magniac sent back word that there were a lot of Boers concealed in a mealie field just in front of him, he was ordered to retire.

After some more firing, Lieutenant Patterson ordered the whole force to mount and advance at a gallop against the enemy's position. They crossed the first quarter of a mile without much opposition, and were just preparing

for the final rush, when two of 76th Company (Sergeant Payne and Corporal Elliment) and two of Driscoll's, slipped by and made straight for the kopje. The rest of the party followed hard after them, expecting every moment to see the gallant four shot down. Only a few shots were fired, however, and when the top of the kopje was gained, it was found that the Boers had all cleared off, and they were seen taking up a new position on another kopje some distance further on.

The body of Corporal Moffat, of Driscoll's Scouts, who was killed at dawn, was now found in the vacated position, lying under some rocks. A bullet had gone through his thigh, another through his chest, another under the chin, and one just by the eye. His comrades were convinced that this last shot had been fired by the Boers to murder him after he was wounded, so it would have gone hard with any of the enemy if they had fallen into their hands that day. Volley after volley was fired at the new Boer position, the effect of which was not known. Meanwhile, the wagons were loaded up with grain and despatched homewards, and as the day was now far advanced, the whole force withdrew from the kopje, and returned unmolested to Ladybrand.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON February 12th an expedition was sent out to fetch forage from a farm some nine miles from Ladybrand. In order to escape the notice of the Boer spies the troops paraded outside the town after dark. Eighty men of 76th Company and Driscoll's Scouts stole out to the rendezvous by twos and threes. The night was dark and threatening, and very soon after the start was made, a terrific storm burst. The rain came down in torrents, accompanied by blinding flashes of lightning. The blackness after the vivid flashes was so intense, that although the men's knees were touching, it was impossible to see either the next horse or its rider. In the darkness two or three men fell with their horses into a spruit about eight feet deep, but fortunately no one was hurt. The horses now refused to face the storm, and the force was obliged to halt. After some time the storm abated as suddenly as it had commenced, and the party were able to push forward again.

At last, soon after midnight, Scott's Farm was reached, and here the men lay down in their soaking clothes to try and snatch a few hours sleep. At 5 o'clock next morning the party was in the saddle again, and proceeded to the farm where the forage was to be obtained. 76th Company took up commanding positions all round it while the fifteen wagons were being loaded up, and when this was successfully accomplished the Column returned to Ladybrand, which was reached in the evening. They had been out for twenty-one hours,

about seventeen of which had been passed in the saddle. It had been a rough little journey, although no serious opposition was met with.

So far the season at Ladybrand had been an exceptionally dry one, but about this time there were very heavy rains, often accompanied by terrific thunder and lightning.

On February 18th another foraging expedition was sent out to a farm about eight miles distant. Here fifteen wagons were loaded up with wheat, and a number of cattle rounded up within full view of a Boer picquet which had been placed there to guard the farm. The burghers were, however, too weak to offer much resistance. A good deal of wheat had, unfortunately, to be left behind, as the wagons would not hold it all. Driscoll's Scouts left Ladybrand on the 19th to go to Bloemfontein, where, curiously enough, they joined another squadron of the Rough Riders, viz., 78th Company.

The town of Ladybrand was startled on the morning of February 20th by hearing the big guns being fired. The Boers had been spreading the news that the garrison had no guns, so to belie this report the gunners sent a number of shells on to an adjacent kopje. One of these burst prematurely high up in the air, and fell close to a Kaffir location, but no harm was done. There was great consternation amongst the townspeople, and 76th Company's Kaffir cook was so frightened that he locked himself up in the kitchen, where he wept copiously.

On February 22nd, two troops of 76th Company, thirty of the Black Watch M.I., and twenty Infantry in wagons, set off to Ranger's Hoek, and to the farms in the vicinity of the Vier Voet Mountain, about fourteen miles distant, in order to clear them of grain and forage. The Boers were known to be in this neighbourhood, and were expected to oppose vigorously the capture of their

grain supplies, and prevent them, if possible, from being carried off into Ladybrand. Very careful dispositions had, therefore, to be made. Sergeant Hodgson and ten men were sent on in advance at 2 o'clock in the morning, to seize a kopje which commanded a gorge, through which the wagons had to pass. This kopje overlooked the farm Vrolykheid, where Sergeant Dearle had been killed a short time previously. On the other side of the Pass lay the Vier Voet. The remainder of the force followed this advance party a couple of hours later on.

Ranger's Hoek was a deep bay or inlet into the hills at the furthest end of the Vier Voet from Ladybrand. The precipitous cliffs which surrounded it sent out long spurs at the extremities, so that the way round for the wagons was a very long one. To ensure the safety of the convoy on its return journey, small parties of four men each were posted on commanding kopjes and in treacherous dongas in the vicinity of the Farm Vrolykheid, this being the most dangerous part of the country. It was well that this precaution was taken, as the story of the day's fighting will show.

It was essential for the safety of the wagons that the heights above Ranger's Hoek should be occupied. The only way to effect this was by climbing up on to the Vier Voet, and making a circuitous route along the top round the deep bay. Therefore, Lieutenant Patterson, with about fifteen troopers, clambered up a steep path in single file, leading their horses. The Yeomen had no sooner reached the top than they were spied by the Boers, who were in force on the cliffs on the opposite side of the bay, just above Ranger's Hoek.

At the further end of the bay, the Vier Voet contracted to a narrow nek, with precipitous cliffs on either side. Across this nek was a stone wall. This was a position which the Boers had often held before, and out

of which the British had never been able to drive them ; and it was absolutely necessary to secure this stronghold before the Boers could get there. Both parties now galloped for this point, and as the distance was about four miles, and the two parties were in full view of each other all the way, the race was a most exciting one. A couple of Yeomen came down very heavily, as their horses put their feet into holes, but there was no time to halt to enquire about broken bones. It was a case of the best man and the fleetest horse to the front. Sergeant Trimmer and Trooper Davis got first to the stone wall, defeating the Boers by about four hundred yards. The burghers immediately recognised that they were beaten, and retired under a brisk fire to the shelter of a Kaffir kraal, and a donga about a thousand yards away.

The Yeomen's horses were now placed under cover in a hollow, and the men posted in suitable positions across the nek. The Boers were re-inforced by parties of threes and fours from different points, and an attack was momentarily expected. They did not come on, however, so after a time the Yeomen, thinking that the Boers had gone away, came out of the cover in which they had taken their positions, and sat on the wall and on the rocks around. But the Boers had only been lying low in the hope that the Yeomen would follow, and be drawn into an ambush which they had prepared for them. Finding that this ruse did not succeed, they now suddenly fired a volley into the party, spattering lead all round the rocks and wall—fortunately without hitting a man. Everyone hastily took cover again, and replied briskly to the Boer fire.

In the midst of this fusillade a party of about thirty men were seen galloping towards the rear of the position held by the British. This turned out to be Lieutenant West, with some of the Black Watch M.I., coming with timely reinforcements.

While the Yeomanry continued to fire at the Boers, Lieutenant West was ordered to charge them, and this the M.I. did in splendid style, with ranks well extended, and every horse going at his best pace. It was too much for the enemy, who turned and fled, leaving a spur and some blood on the ground. Lieutenant West lost one horse killed and one wounded, but had no other casualties.

Meanwhile the party with the wagons had trekked off to Ranger's Hoek, but had found it impossible to begin the work of loading them up while the Boers remained on the heights above. To assist in driving them off, therefore, Lieutenant Pelly, with six men and two Kaffirs, commenced to ascend straight up the cliff on the side of the bay opposite where the party of Yeomen had clambered up. They left their horses below and ordered two men to watch the top, and give any Boers who should pop their heads over the top a warm time. The section of nine crawled slowly up through the bushes, stalking from rock to rock. It was a hard time and the heat was intense, but neither difficulties nor the knowledge that Boer riflemen were on the ridge above could stop the venturesome party, and the top was at last gained. From this position Lieutenant Patterson's men could now be seen some miles off fighting merrily with the Boers. Presently one of the enemy, who were being steadily driven back, was seen flying for his life straight towards the party on the cliff. The latter did not wish to fire, for fear of disclosing their position to the Burghers behind them. It seemed pretty certain that the Boer would be bagged without wasting any ammunition. Just as his capture seemed a certainty, however, the flying man got amongst some rocks, where he hid like a rabbit about eight hundred yards off, when some men in pursuit came galloping up. The man left his lair in the rocks, and

in spite of the fire of several rifles, ran across the open and managed to escape down the cliff to his comrades.

Six of the wagons at Ranger's Hoek were meanwhile filled up with mealies, and it was now deemed advisable to trek homewards with the spoil. So far, only one horse had been killed, another wounded, and a Kaffir's leg grazed with a bullet. As soon as the wagons had trekked to a safe distance the posts around Ranger's Hoek were ordered to retire. Scarcely had they commenced to descend the hill when bullets began spattering from the top, where the Boers had been lying hidden among the rocks all day. Luckily, no one was hit. As the wagons had by this time got beyond any danger of a serious attack from the rear, the party of Yeomen, who had been acting as rearguard, on the hill, galloped forward ahead of the wagons and again climbed the Vier Voet by a steep path, close to the place where they had reached the summit in the morning. This new position was secured as the leading wagon entered the gorge. The party were only just in time to foil the Boers, who had determined to attack the convoy at this place. A part of the Yeomanry, under Lieutenant Magniac, also held the kopje at the opposite side of the gorge overlooking the farm Vrolykheid. The Boers made an attempt to take this hill, but were repulsed by Magniac's men, with the loss of at least one killed and several wounded. The donga was also made use of by the Boers, and a strong party crept along it unobserved, to within four hundred yards of the convoy, and a sharp fire was opened. Lieutenant Pelly and Lieutenant Bullock of the Black Watch, both had very narrow escapes. A sergeant and four men of the Black Watch had been posted in this donga all day, but on seeing the leading wagons go through the gorge, they had returned to the convoy and reported all clear. The Boers were naturally only waiting

for this chance, and simply followed the Highlanders down the donga, and then attacked the convoy from its friendly shelter. It seemed as if there was going to be a great deal of trouble here, but just as matters began to look very serious, the Yeomanry and M.I., who had galloped up from the rearguard, and had climbed the Vier Voet, got into position and raked the donga from their splendid vantage ground. This fire speedily routed the enemy, and the convoy got safely through the Pass, and reached Ladybrand soon after dark. The rearguard however did not get back until 10 p.m., as it had to hold on to its positions for a considerable time to prevent any pursuit of the slow moving ox wagons. It had been a very long and trying day for both men and horses, but the troops were quite cheery over it, as they had beaten the Boers all through at their own game.

CHAPTER XXII.

THERE was no lack of interesting expeditions for the mounted men at Ladybrand. On February 26th the Company was sent out to escort a convoy. They marched 25 miles before halting, and on the next day returned to Ladybrand guarding treasure to the amount of £15,000 for the payment of the troops. An expedition was also made to Scott's Farm on the 28th for the purpose of arranging an outpost there. On the return of the party they heard that a number of Boers had been watching them the whole time, and were trying to get into a deep spruit in order to ambush them. The posting of two men in a position which fortunately commanded the spruit defeated their intention.

On the night of Saturday, March 2nd, a party started at 8 p.m. with wagons, on another foraging expedition, to bring in supplies. They marched first in a direction directly opposite to that in which they intended to go in order to mislead the Boer spies. Then after making a big detour they halted at Scott's Farm. Here the general idea was explained to everyone. A big tract of country was to be taken in and a sort of "drive" was arranged. The Mounted Infantry were to seize and occupy some rough kopjes, the Infantry were to guard the flanks, while 76th Company was to drive the Boers on to the strong positions held by the Black Watch M.I.

At 2 p.m. the farm belonging to Mrs. Slaughter was surrounded. It was expected that her son, who was

a notorious ringleader in the district, would be found there. The women in the house were in bed at the time and terribly frightened. They begged for time to dress before the house was searched, protesting that there were no Boers on the farm. It seemed probable that this was true, as no horse was to be found in the stable, so it was decided not to search the house. A guard was left over it, however, and the women were told that if anyone moved out they would be shot, and if any attempt was made to communicate with the Boers, either by sign or by natives, the house and all the buildings would be burned. The horses were then got into a spruit, and the remainder of the men posted on kopjes all round the house, but at some distance from it. These men had a most uncomfortable time of it, for there was a very heavy dew falling, and after walking for miles through long wet grass, they had now to lie and shiver until daylight. Just as dawn was breaking, however, at about 5.30, a detachment of Boers walked unsuspectingly into the trap prepared for them.

The post of Black Watch M.I., on the end kopje, saw two Boers riding towards them chatting and laughing. These were followed by three others at some little distance—all apparently quite unconscious of danger. The M.I. did not wish to fire at the first two for fear of alarming the other three, so they allowed them to approach quite close, and then ordered them to "hands up." Instead of doing this they turned to bolt. Simultaneously all the rifles rang out. One of the men must have received at least four bullets in his body, and his horse about the same number. Both, however, went gallantly on for about seven hundred yards, when the rider fell, and a few yards further on the horse also dropped on its haunches and fell over. The man was not quite dead, and just managed to crawl over to his horse

and lie beside it. The second Boer was also badly wounded, but the other three escaped. Three of the Mounted Infantry were sent down at once to attend to the wounded Boer, and a messenger was sent off to the women at the farm, but before they arrived, the fellow was dead. When the women accompanied by an old Boer, came up, they recognised the dead man as young Slaughter, the son of the woman whose house had been surrounded in the night. It was a very tragic fate to be shot on his own land, so near his home, but he had been a notorious spy and ringleader, and the news of his death was received with a feeling of relief in and around Ladybrand. The force returned to Ladybrand about 5 p.m., after an outing of twenty-one hours, most of which had been spent in the saddle.

During this successful little expedition, the force had been guided by a local resident, an Englishman named Prosser. He had volunteered for service with the British troops at the outbreak of the war, and had served in Rimington's Guides. He was one of the pluckiest men imaginable, and was hated by the Boers owing to his well-known sympathy with the British cause, and for the active and able assistance he always gave them. He lived in a farm some eight miles from Ladybrand, and was told repeatedly by his friends that it was not safe to do so. His invariable reply was that he would not run away if all the Boers in South Africa were to encamp at the Mill (a place close to his farm). It is sad to have to relate that in the end the Boers did come one night and, pushing their rifles through the window, shot poor Prosser dead, as he lay in bed asleep. His wife and mother were both in the house at the time, and it was only by a mere chance that they escaped being shot also by these cowardly scoundrels.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN order came on March 8th that 76th Company and the Black Watch M.I. were to go to strengthen the line between Coomissie Poort and the Caledon River, which formed part of the eighty-mile line of out-posts between Bloemfontein and the borders of Basutoland. De Wet was at this time being hunted up the Orange River Colony, and General Lyttleton was effecting a drive up the South-Eastern side of the Colony against the Bloemfontein-Ladybrand line of posts. 76th Company and the Black Watch M.I. set off at once, and arrived in the evening at Zwartlaagte, one of the posts on the line held by one Company of the Black Watch, and a troop of 76th Company I.Y., under Lieutenant Thursby.

On March 10th the little force, which was about sixty strong, was sent out with orders to patrol to a point about ten miles off. They were warned to exercise great care, as there were numbers of Boers about in parties of thirty and forty. The sixty horsemen occupied a frontage of about two miles, and reached the appointed place without meeting any opposition. They then ventured further on, and came into a very rich country full of cattle and sheep. Here they took up a good position on a kopje, and sent men to round up the flocks and herds. These were then driven to within six miles of Zwartlaagte, when it was thought that they were fairly safe, and that it was unnecessary for the whole force to see them in. Driving sheep is a very



**COLUMN PARKED IN MEQUATLING'S NEK UNDER THE
N.W. END OF THE VIER VOET.**



76TH COMPANY CROSSING THE DRIFT AT KROONSTAD

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slow and tiresome duty for mounted men who had already had a long day's work in the saddle. Accordingly, twelve mounted men were left behind and posted on a kopje commanding the road along which the cattle were being driven, while the remainder of the escort pushed on, leaving the Kaffir drivers to bring in the flocks. This was the Boers' opportunity, and they readily seized it. The British had proceeded for about two miles when a number of Boers, who had not even been seen all the day, suddenly appeared, and made a most determined attack upon the party to regain their stock. All the native drivers took refuge in a donga, while a messenger was sent in hot haste from the post on the kopje to recall the mounted troops, who quickly came galloping back to the rescue. The Black Watch M.I. collected the sheep again, while volleys from 76th Company kept the enemy's fire down. The men and horses were much too tired to make a direct attack on the Boers, but they laid a trap for them, and left twelve men hidden, to ambush them if they should attempt to follow. The Boers, however, were very cautious, and the ambuscaders were only able to get in some long shots at them. Camp was safely reached in the evening with all the captured stock, which consisted of some thousands of sheep and cattle.

Two days after this, Colonel Harley's Column of several hundred mounted men, with a pompom, arrived. Amongst the men were shoeing-smiths Heath and Watkins, who had been captured at Vrolykheid on November 30th, when poor Sergeant Dearle was killed.

On March 14th, 76th Company had another exciting brush with the enemy. They and the Black Watch M.I. had been out all day on a long patrol and were returning to camp, when Lieutenant Patterson spotted some Boers making for a kopje close to which the patrol

would pass. Sergeant Payne and six men were at once sent off at a gallop to secure the hill, approaching it from the side opposite to the Boers, while Lieutenants Patterson and Thursby, with a dozen men, made a detour so as to take the Boers in the rear. Three of the enemy caught sight of this party as it galloped over a ridge, and immediately took flight, pursued by the Yeomen, as fast as their horses would take them.

After a chase of about three miles, Lieutenant Patterson got to within fifty yards of the Boers and shouted to them to "hands up," but they took no notice of this. He then fired on them from horseback. On this, they pulled up short, dismounted, and, seeing that he was alone (for the others had been left a long way behind during the chase) opened fire. Instantly, Lieutenant Patterson threw himself off his horse, which galloped on through the Boers, and pulled up a little distance further on. He had a marvellous escape as one of the bullets went through his hat. Other bullets struck the ground all round the place where he had fallen, and the Boers, not seeing him rise, concluded that they had killed him. Patterson, however, had quickly rolled over in the grass, and turning up at an unexpected place, fired at and dropped one of the Boers. He then wriggled on for a few yards further through the grass, popped up and fired again, this time wounding another Boer who had his rifle levelled at him. The bullet went through the man's arm, causing him to drop the rifle. The third Boer, seeing the turn things had taken, now mounted and fled. The Boer who was wounded in the arm ran to his horse and was mounting, when Patterson again fired at him, missing him, but dropping the horse dead, shot through the heart. The Boer instantly ran to the other horse, which belonged to his wounded comrade, and mounting it, rode rapidly off. Patterson was powerless

to do anything further, as he had only three cartridges with him when the fight started. He was in the habit of putting his bandolier round the horse's neck, and when he had thrown himself off, the horse galloped off with it. Now, however, Corporal Elliment rode up, greatly distressed that his horse had not brought him more quickly. He had plenty of ammunition with him, so both now blazed away at the fleeing Boer, with the result that he fell off his horse, and was captured by Lieutenant Thursby, and some others of the party, who had by this time ridden up. The third Boer was also hotly pursued and shot when almost within his own lines. The first who had been hit turned out to be one of De Wet's Field Cornets. He was very severely wounded, as the bullet had traversed his thigh and smashed it. He was dressed in khaki, and his bandolier was found to be full of soft-nosed expanding bullets. When captured, he very philosophically remarked that he had killed many Englishmen, and that now his turn had come. The wounded prisoners were then brought in to camp, and sent on for treatment to Thaba Nchu Hospital. The rifles which they had been using belonged to the Coldstream Guards, and many of the bullets in their bandoliers had the tops filed off, while some appeared to be of an explosive kind, as they had a copper cap fixed at the top of the bullet.

Next morning, Lieutenant Patterson rode out with some men to the same place, and succeeded in capturing five Boers, who had concealed themselves in a kloof. In an article in the "Daily Telegraph," of May 13th, 1901, Bennett Burleigh describes the incident as follows:—"Next morning, riding out again from camp with his men, Captain Patterson found that the main body of the Boers had vanished. Approaching a farm house inhabited only by women, he saw a wagon from which

the wheels seemingly had been quite recently removed. The Boer mistress stated that the wagon had been in that wrecked condition throughout the war. Her husband and sons were not upon commando, but had gone to Basutoland to escape service under De Wet. And so on the broad dame talked, declaring her household had taken no part in the war. Patterson called a negro boy aside, and from him ascertained that the wagon wheels were hid but 800 yards from the house. The native in a further burst of confidence stated that in a kloof but a hundred yards distant, five Boers, including the woman's sons and husband, were hidden. Patterson found the men, who absurdly declared that they had gone into the kloof to talk about the weather and the crops! Upon each were found irregular passes. Attempting to reason with them and to do them a kindness, Captain Patterson promised them that if they would hand over their rifles and ammunition, he would ignore the broken passes, and have them merely dealt with as ordinary prisoners of war. If, however, they refused to do so, he would hold them for having broken their parole, which would expose them to the severest punishment. For nearly half an hour these five Boers debated the wisdom or unwisdom of surrendering their rifles. Finally, they flatly refused to hand in or disclose where their rifles were hidden, so all were held as prisoners who had broken their parole."

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON March 19th, orders were received to return to Ladybrand, so the Company set off at once.

General Bruce Hamilton, with his staff, arrived at Zwartelaagte, after his fruitless hunt after De Wet. On the way back, passing Coomissie Poort, the Company could see to the south the smoke from the granaries and buildings containing supplies of all kinds, which had been fired by the beaters during the drive. On reaching Ladybrand orders were received that the Company was to hold itself in readiness to join Colonel Broadwood's column at Kroonstad.

Colonel Pilcher's force of Mounted Infantry arrived at Ladybrand on the 21st. He had been encamped at Modder Poort, north of the Bloemfontein—Ladybrand line of posts, but had not had an opportunity of doing anything. Some of his men had attacked a force of thirty Boers at Langerand, near Mequatling's, but they lost one man killed and two taken prisoners.

On the 22nd, 76th Company was sent out with 100 of Pilcher's M.I., to search some caves for ammunition on the hill where young Slaughter had been killed a short time previously. A few of the party approached Mrs. Slaughter's Farm, and the Corporal of the patrol had a very narrow escape, as he was shot at at a very short range. The farm was evidently occupied by Boers, but the patrol was too weak to attack it. On the approach of some of the M.I., however, the Dutchmen quickly cleared off, and when the British cantered up to the farm they

were solemnly assured by Mrs. Slaughter that no shooting from her house had taken place! There was no time to do more than carry off whatever poultry could be found, otherwise the farm should have been burned. The caves on the hill were thoroughly searched, but were found to be empty, and the patrol returned to Ladybrand in the evening.

On Sunday, March 24th, 76th Company were sent off again at 5 a.m., with fifteen wagons, to bring in as much forage as possible. They had a very tiring day, and there was heavy rain. At one place it was found impossible to get the wagons across a spruit, so the party had to trek back again for three miles until a suitable place could be found. At last the farm containing the forage was reached, and the wagons loaded up and brought back to Scott's Farm for the night.

Next morning the spruit had to be crossed again with four wagons to bring away all the family living under the Uysberg, from which the Boers had been obtaining supplies. The Yeomanry and Black Watch showed extraordinary patience over the work of removing these people, and the kindness and consideration with which the troopers treated the women and children was most noticeable. This was absolutely contrary to what the proclamation of Messrs. Steyn and De Wet would have the world believe. It was an anxious time getting the families over the spruit, for there had been heavy rain for the past few days, and the water was very deep in the drifts. The first wagon had a Cape cart tied on behind, which broke its pole on going down into the spruit, scattering dead geese and other contents into the water. An old couple and a child were on another Cape cart tied behind the second wagon, so, lest the same thing should happen to them, they were removed to a larger vehicle. A brawny Scotchman almost carried the

old woman over the rough ground, another helped the old man, while a third nursed and soothed the child, who was crying with fright at the rush of the water. The old woman was afterwards given tea and bread and butter from the officers' mess. The greatest consideration was always shown to these people, and yet some well known Boer leaders, as well as English politicians, talk of the "brutality of the British soldier!" Parties were sent out nearly every day from Ladybrand to bring in forage, and destroy grain and stores.

On March 30th, the Company marched out with Pilcher's M.I. for two or three days patrol. They had the usual exciting times with the Boers, who wasted a great quantity of ammunition on the Yeomen without any effect. A number of farms were visited, and grain and supplies destroyed. A good deal of opposition was met with at two rich farms under the Corunnaberg, which was a strong Boer retreat. They were well defended by the enemy, who made the work of clearing them a dangerous one. There was some sharp firing here, but no damage was done. The force returned to Ladybrand in small parties on April 2nd, the last not getting in until some time after midnight.

On April 4th another force, consisting of three officers and seventy men (thirty Infantry, and forty Yeomen and M.I.), left Ladybrand by moonlight, under the command of Lieutenant Pelly, to bring in a lot of wheat from Gilpin's Farm, about thirteen miles out. They had with them eighteen Government wagons and five belonging to a man called Rhode, who was most anxious to have his wheat brought in. The night was spent at a miller's house,, and early in the morning the column set off again. Posts of infantry and mounted men were placed at commanding positions along the road, so that the line of retreat should not be cut off.

When Gilpin's Farm was reached it was found that Rhode's Farm was about four miles further on, although he had said it was quite close. His five wagons were, therefore, despatched there with a guard of ten mounted men under Corporal Elliment to hold the ground. The Boers, who were always hovering around, saw their opportunity here. They waited until the first wagon was loaded up and on its way back to the main party. Then when the Kaffir drivers had taken it beyond the range of the escort's rifles, two of them swooped down and took possession of it. Meanwhile nineteen more Boers appeared from various directions, and held up the guard of ten men. The escort quickly took up good positions, and a merry fight began. The Yeomen ordered the Kaffirs to continue loading, and get the wagons away while they engaged the burghers, threatening to shoot them if they refused. The enemy pressed forward to close round the little party. They were led by a thick set Dutchman, who attempted to take possession of a stone kraal in which, unknown to him, two of the escort were concealed. These two (Elliment being one) allowed the Boers to approach, and, when they drew near, their leader got a bullet through his body. He managed, however, to turn and ride away. Another Boer had his horse shot dead, so they began to think it was about time to retire.

Meanwhile, word had been sent back to Lieutenant Pelly that his men were in difficulties, and he now came galloping up with six troopers, which were all that he had left with him. When the Boers saw these reinforcements coming, and not knowing how many more were following, they finally withdrew. One wagon, was, of course, irretrievably lost, but the others were brought safely away. An attack was momentarily expected along the road, but the last spruit was crossed shortly after midnight, and the whole twenty wagons safely reached Scott's Farm, where the caravan bivouacked.

Next morning Lieutenant Pelly considered it advisable to send in to Ladybrand for reinforcements, whereupon fifty mounted men were sent out, and under this escort the convoy was brought safely into the town by nightfall.

That the Boers had not captured the whole of the wagons at Rhode's Farm was entirely due to the plucky resistance offered by the few Yeomen under Corporal Elliment, and on his return to Ladybrand, Lieutenant Pelly brought this fact to the notice of the Commandant. Lord Kitchener showed his appreciation of Elliment's conduct by promoting him to be Sergeant for gallantry in the field. This was not by any means the only time that this plucky non-commissioned officer distinguished himself, and later in the war, when he was Regimental-Sergeant-Major of the 33rd Battalion I.Y., Lieut.-Colonel Patterson recommended him for the Distinguished Conduct Medal, which he most thoroughly deserved. He did not, however, receive it.

CHAPTER XXV.

EARLY on the morning of Easter Sunday (April 7th) wagons and escort set off again to bring in more forage. This time they were unmolested, though there were plenty of Boers about. On returning to Ladybrand the following morning the party learned that orders had meanwhile arrived for 76th Company to leave Ladybrand, and proceed immediately to Kroonstad.

The Commandant, Colonel Carthew-Yorstoun, was exceedingly sorry to lose such a useful portion of his garrison, as by this time the Company knew every inch of the country all round Ladybrand, and had learned to beat the Boers at their own game. He, therefore, wired to the Chief Staff Officer at Bloemfontein that the services of the Company were invaluable to him, and begged that they might be allowed to remain. This showed a very marked appreciation of the efficiency of the Company, who naturally were very much pleased at the high compliment paid to them. The telegram, however, proved ineffectual, and on April 11th the Company's long stay of five months at Ladybrand came to an end. They set off early in the morning, under the command of Lieutenant Patterson, and marched along the line of outposts held by the Black Watch, Worcesters, and Warwicks. Bloemfontein was reached without mishap on April 15th, and here they lingered waiting for definite orders to continue their journey to Kroonstad. No train, however, was apparently available, unless they left all their spare horses behind. As each man had two horses

it will be seen that the efficiency of the Company would in this case have been very much reduced. They wished, therefore, to trek to Kroonstad, but the authorities would not allow this. After various orders and counter-orders the Company finally entrained on the 20th after having had twenty horses taken away from them. The men were crowded together in open trucks, but the horses had covered ones.

During the journey an amusing episode occurred. When the train pulled up at Virginia Siding, an inspection was made of the horses, and it was found that several were down in the trucks. Lieutenant Patterson then told the guard of the train that he would take all the horses out and water them at the river. The guard replied that he was in command of the train, and he would not keep it at the Siding a moment after the down train had passed, and that if the horses were taken out, they and the men would be left behind. Upon this the guard was promptly placed under arrest between two armed men on the platform. The driver of the train then came up to see what was the matter, and on being told, said that he would take the train on whether the guard was in it or not. He, too, was therefore placed under arrest between an armed guard. Meanwhile, the horses were taken out, and watering and feeding went on briskly. Soon all were in the trucks again, and the driver and the guard were released. The driver at first refused to go on, but when he found that Lieutenant Patterson could drive the engine, and was about to start for Kroonstad, leaving him at the bare and deserted siding, he caved in and gave no further trouble. The guard, too, vowed vengeance on the officer, and wired a report to Bloemfontein, but nothing was ever heard of it.

Kroonstad was reached at 10 a.m. on the 22nd. Here it became known that the Company

was to return home, and that Lieutenant Patterson, now promoted Captain, was to take over command of the new 76th Company Imperial Yeomanry, which at this time was with General Broadwood. Next day, therefore, that officer left with all the horses and a few of the men, to join General Broadwood at Honning Spruit. From this station all the old Yeomanry of 78th Company from General Eliot's division left for home on the 24th, picking up 76th Company at Kroonstad. The two re-united Companies travelled together to Cape Town, which was reached on April 28th. They then remained at Green Point until a vessel could be found.

Sergeant Taylor received a commission, and remained behind. Corporal Craven became Q.M.S. to the new 78th Company, while Sergeant Elliment was made Sergeant-Major of the new 76th Company. Troopers Cranton and Causey also remained with the new Yeomanry. Captain Colvin rejoined the Company at Cape Town. Captain Patterson also returned within a few days, having obtained three months leave. He returned to South Africa as Lieut.-Colonel Commanding the 33rd Battalion I.Y. All the old hands, reduced in numbers to about forty, but having all their officers with them, sailed in the "Avondale Castle" on May 16th. 78th Company, also reduced in numbers to about thirty-five, with Captain Moore and Lieutenant Lord Zouche, sailed in the same ship. These two small Companies arrived home early in June, and were discharged very soon afterwards.

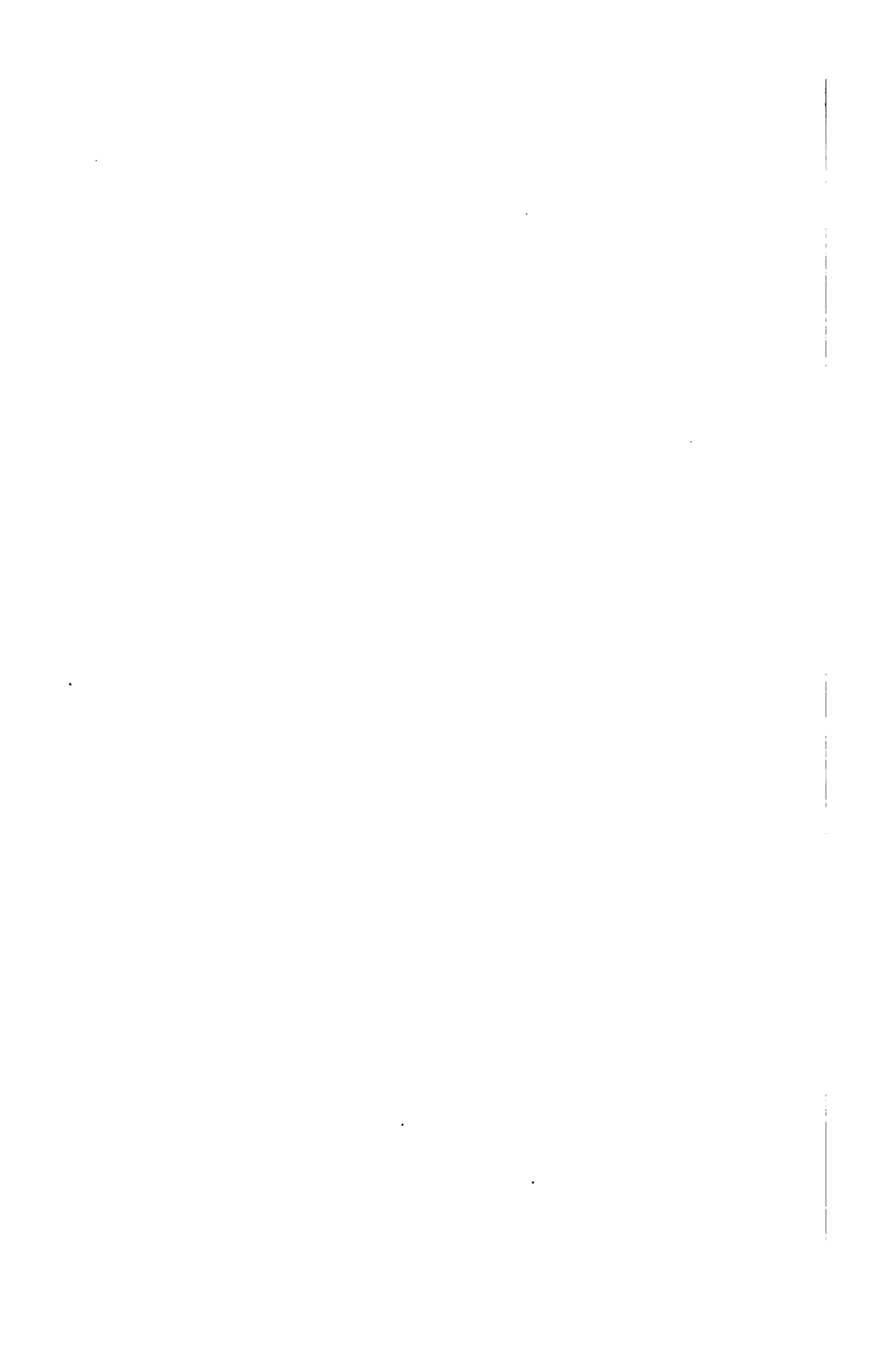


**DOCTOR EXAMINING THE TROOPS FOR PLAGUE
BEFORE EMBARKATION FOR HOME.**



S.S. "AVONDALE CASTLE," CAPE TOWN, MAY 16TH, 1901.

72ND & 79TH COMPANIES.



CHAPTER XXVI.

72ND AND 79TH COMPANIES.

1900

AFTER the 76th and 78th Companies had left Cape Colony for Bloemfontein, the other half Battalion, consisting of the 72nd and 79th Companies, remained at Wellington under the command of Captain Chadwick. They made themselves very popular here, although the place was a great rebel centre.

On July 5th, in the midst of an entertainment given by the people of Wellington, these Companies suddenly received orders to proceed northwards with as little delay as possible. They accordingly set off at once, and arrived at Bloemfontein on July 10th. Here they were obliged to detrain, and bivouack for a couple of days near the station, as the line to the north had been blown up, and all the traffic was blocked. They were joined at Bloemfontein by Colonel Colvin and the Battalion Staff, who had just arrived from De Aar.

It will be remembered that the Staff accompanied 78th Company when they left Wellington on June 18th, 1900. They arrived with that Company at Bloemfontein on June 21st, but shortly afterwards, for some inexplicable reason, they were ordered to return to Wellington. Lord Roberts was appealed to, but as no answer was received, the Staff had reluctantly to prepare to return. Meanwhile, Captain Walcot, the Medical Officer, was taken ill with enteric, and went to St. Michael's Home, Bloem-

fontein, where he fortunately soon recovered, and joined the Staff again about six weeks later.

On June 27th the Battalion Staff entrained again for the return journey to De Aar. Colonel Colvin, having heard that 72nd and 79th Companies were shortly to be sent north, persuaded the General not to send them any further back on a perfectly useless journey.

De Aar was reached on the 28th, and camp was pitched near the station in the hope that orders would immediately come to go north again. The Staff was, however, kept here for ten days, separated from the Regiment, and having absolutely nothing to do. At last General Settle passed through, and was entertained to dinner by the Battalion Staff, and it may possibly have been through his influence that orders were received for them shortly afterwards to proceed to Pretoria with the 72nd and 79th Companies.

De Aar was finally left on July 7th, and the Staff reached Bloemfontein the next day. 72nd and 79th Companies arrived a couple of days later. When the block on the line to the north had been cleared off, a train was luckily secured on July 12th, and in this the Battalion Staff and 72nd Company set off in very good spirits for Pretoria. The officers, numbering eleven, occupied a guard's van—a tight fit. 79th Company followed by another train.

The journey through this now historic country was very interesting, and to get a better view, some of the officers occasionally rode on the top of the guard's van. The men with all their belongings were crowded together in open trucks.

Pretoria was reached on the evening of the 13th, and 72nd Company bivouacked in and around the Station. 79th Company arrived early next morning. A great deal of stores and baggage had to be abandoned, as the trans-



ENTRAINING THE HORSES OF 79TH COMPANY.



79TH COMPANY IN ACTION.



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port was limited. The two Companies were, on arrival at Pretoria, formed up and inspected by Colonel Lord Valentia, A.A.G., I.Y., and General Brabazon. Afterwards they marched out about three miles to camp, and on the way were again inspected by Lord Roberts.

On their arrival in camp Colonel Colvin was appointed to the command of a composite Regiment of Yeomanry, consisting of 72nd Company, 79th Company, a mixed Company of Dorset (26th Company), Sussex (69th Company), and Devon (27th Company), men, under Captain Sir Elliott Lees, M.P., and a Company of Fife Light Horse (20th Company), under Captain W. B. C. Hodge. Major Brown, Dorset I.Y., was appointed 2nd in Command, and Captain Welford was made Medical Officer. It may be mentioned here that Captain Hodge was subsequently killed at Zuphfontein on October 31st, being shot when on advance guard with Colonel Clement's force. Captain Welford, too, a most gallant officer, subsequently died of wounds received at Vlakfontein. Lieutenant Stanley, commanding the gun section of the composite regiment, was killed at Hekpoort. Lieutenant R. W. Purvis, of the Fife Light Horse, was severely wounded at Noitgedacht, on December 13th. He fortunately recovered, however, and returned to England with Colonel Colvin.

This composite Regiment of Yeomanry was attached to Colonel Pilcher's force, consisting of the 3rd Mounted Infantry viz., 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, 1st North Lancaster Regiment, 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and the York L.I., the Imperial Light Horse, and New Zealanders, which formed part of General Mahon's Brigade, and was in Sir Ian Hamilton's Division. Meanwhile the men were busily engaged in pitching tents, but the smell from the carcasses of one hundred and fifty horses, which were very sketchily buried close by,

rendered the camp a most unpleasant one. Sunday was spent sorting and storing the surplus luggage, as the Battalion was to be ready to march off early on the following morning.

At 6 a.m. on Monday morning, July 16th, the Battalion started off with Colonel Pilcher's force, to take part in the general advance which was being made against the Boers, East of Pretoria. 79th Company formed the escort to the pom-poms, while the Fife Yeomanry, who had only just reached Pretoria after a long trek, were the rearguard. The force had orders to join General French at Derdepoort, and this place was reached about 8 a.m. Here the general plan of the campaign was explained.

General Ian Hamilton, on the left flank, was advancing north to Waterval. He was to clear the hills called the Pyramids, and then wheel round a quarter of a circle to the east, closing on the Delagoa Bay Railway at Bronkhorst Spruit. General Mahon's Brigade, consisting entirely of mounted men was, curiously enough, to form the pivot flank on the right. Colonel Pilcher's force formed the extreme right of General Mahon's Brigade, and covered a front of nearly six miles.

As soon as the advance commenced Colonel Colvin's Battalion proceeded very slowly, and sent out a patrol from 72nd Company, under Lieutenant Digby, who obtained communication with Colonel Henry's force, which was holding the hills to our right, about six miles off. 72nd and 79th Companies now came into action for the first time. The engagement began by the Boers dropping a shell from an unseen gun between General Mahon and General French. Fortunately, neither of them was hurt. Desultory firing continued during the day, but early in the afternoon the Boers withdrew their gun. One of the transport carts belonging to the Rough

Riders broke down during the day, and the man in charge of it was taken prisoner by the Boers, who were always on the look out for stragglers.

After advancing for about four miles, a kopje was selected and made secure by building schantzes, i.e., stone breastworks, and a strong picquet was placed here. During the night the sentry on duty alarmed the picquet and told them that a man had just come up and sat down near him, and when challenged had run up a tree! This "man" turned out to be a baboon, which abound in these parts. The rest of the force had a comfortable bivouack among the hills, and were not disturbed during the night.

Next day, July 17th, the brigade remained stationary, 79th Company being sent out to reconnoitre, but on the 18th the advance was resumed, in an open undulating country. No opposition was met with during the day's march, and the force bivouacked in a good position with the Kameldrift River in front. More schantzes were built, which were occupied by 72nd and 79th Companies.

An early start was made on the 19th; a kopje some few miles in front was observed to be held by the Boers, and was reached about 3 p.m. Colonel Colvin, with two squadrons, was ordered to take this hill. He accordingly extended 72nd Company to the right, and 79th Company to the left. The party had to advance across an open plain for about 1,000 yards, and then gallop up the kopje, Lance-Corporal Mountain reaching the top first. (This poor fellow died some months afterwards at Pretoria of enteric). It was found on dismounting that the Boers had retired across some thickly wooded hills at the back of the position. Word was sent back to Colonel Pilcher that the hill was taken, and he ordered it to be held. Colonel Colvin, with the two Companies, therefore remained on it all night. A buck which had just been shot by the Boers was abandoned

by them in their flight. One haunch had been taken off, but the remainder provided an excellent dinner for the Rough Riders. Next day Colonel Colvin and 79th Company rejoined the main force, leaving 72nd Company, under Captain Chadwick, to hold the hill. Just as they were starting, a heavy rifle fire was heard, which proved to be the Boers firing on a patrol of the New Zealanders, who were at close range. Fortunately, no one was hit. 72nd Company were attacked on the second night by some Boers, who crept up the hill under cover of the darkness and fired into their bivouack. No harm was done, and the enemy were driven off after a few rounds.

On July 21st the advance was again resumed in an easterly direction towards Tweefontein, where General Ian Hamilton was heard to be engaged with the Boers. Shells were seen bursting on our left. The ground was very broken and rocky, and during the day the Battalion was chiefly engaged in seizing and holding kopjes. A very fine Boer of Jewish appearance surrendered, and his bandolier was discovered to be full of soft-nosed bullets. On reaching Ian Hamilton's column it was found that his transport was being shelled. The Boers made very good practice, although only one native was killed. The force camped near Elands River, and here 72nd Company rejoined.

Early next morning, July 22nd, the river was crossed in a thick fog. It was found that the Boers had trekked during the night. Colonel Colvin's Battalion of Yeomanry formed part of the advance guard of Sir Ian Hamilton's Division, which now marched in a S.E. direction. About mid-day the Boer guns opened fire from a kopje, and the two guns R.H.A. came into action and replied. 72nd Company was then ordered to clear the kopje. They immediately extended, and galloped to the attack; on seeing this the Boers bolted with great

rapidity. A most exciting race then took place, as the Boers had a gun with them which the Rough Riders were naturally most anxious to capture. The gun was very well horsed, however, and succeeded in getting away.

The main force then followed up and occupied the position just vacated by the Boers, and from this point the enemy could be seen with their gun. It was now about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the horses were tired and the squadrons scattered. Colonel Pilcher ordered Colonel Colvin to collect what men he could and try to take the gun, which was apparently in difficulties, and which he thought the Boers would abandon. Accordingly, the Colonel galloped off at once with Captain Lord Maitland and the Regt.-Sergeant-Major, and all available troops, but before going very far they rode into a bog. They managed to extricate themselves, but a trooper's horse had to be abandoned. After galloping another couple of miles they caught up the Fife Yeomanry, and a troop of 72nd Company. The Fife Squadron came unexpectedly under a heavy fire from the Boers, who were waiting for them in a good position about four hundred yards off, covering the retirement of their guns. Some of the Fifes had dismounted, and were returning the fire. Colonel Colvin ordered them to retire, and bullets came thick and fast around them until they got under cover. A gun was now sent out to the assistance of the party by Colonel Pilcher, who had seen a considerable number of Boer reinforcements coming up. The Yeomanry then took up a defensive position till ordered to return to camp, which was formed about three miles to their rear in a large basin between the hills. The Regimental Sergeant-Major (Weightman) during the retirement under fire, picked up a trooper whose mount had got away, and brought him in on his own horse.

Next day the whole force enjoyed a rest, which was much needed by the horses. It was now joined to General Ian Hamilton's column, which was altogether about 8,000 strong. This large force set out again on July 24th, and marched to Bronkhorst Spruit, the I.Y., New Zealanders, and Queenslanders, forming a strong advance guard. No opposition was met with, but when the station at Bronkhorst Spruit was reached the railway bridge was found to be blown up. Information was also received here that the Boers were rapidly retiring eastwards, destroying all the bridges along the railway as they went. Small bodies of the enemy hung about the rear-guard during the day. The latter engaged them, but the enemy succeeded in capturing 79th Company's wagon with five men. The wagon contained the officers' mess, stores and kits, with a few rifles. The men were kept prisoners until September, when they were released from Barberton, after having had a very hard time.

On arriving at Bronkspruit a store belonging to a German Jew was in danger of being looted. Before much damage was done, however, Colonel Colvin received orders to place sentries round it, with orders to shoot any looter, which put an end to any further destruction. The orders against looting were very stringently enforced among the British troops.

Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener now arrived by train from Pretoria, and marched next day with the division along the railway to Balmoral. There was no opposition, and Balmoral was reached about three o'clock in the afternoon. It was blowing exceedingly hard, and thick clouds were beginning to gather. Heavy rain commenced to fall about six o'clock, and as the transport was a long way in the rear, and there was no chance of getting any food, officers and men sought, supperless, any shelter that could be found. The storm grew steadily worse



From a sketch by Captain Chadwick.

BALMOKAL.

and worse, and it was an awful night. Colonel Colvin and Major Anderson found a corner in a stable full of dripping horses and saturated men, while others made themselves rough shelters with corrugated iron sheets.

The main body had been able to descend into Balmoral, where a certain amount of shelter was obtained, but 72nd Company, who formed part of the rearguard to the Division, were out all night, and exposed to the whole of the storm. They had already passed an anxious vigil the previous evening, as outlying picquet about a mile outside the camp at Bronkspruit, and in the morning had fallen in behind the Battalion of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. After being sniped at all day they now remained on the high plateau which lies between Bronkspruit and Balmoral. Here they caught the full fury of the storm. Rain, hail, sleet, and the most terrific thunder and lightning. As day passed there came an evening calm. But the storm returned with a renewed vigour and a blackness that was terrifying. The Highlanders were formed into column of fours, and the Yeomanry rode in single file on either flank. Everyone was drenched to the skin, and it was with the greatest difficulty that touch could be kept with the column. Finally, about 9 p.m., the Company halted by a drift, as further advance was absolutely impossible. Infantry, Cavalry, and the long lines of wagons and oxen were hopelessly mixed up, and there was nothing to be done but stand shivering knee-deep in mud until morning broke.

During that terrible night Lieutenant Maclaren and three men of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders died on the road from cold and exposure. Three Kaffirs also died, as well as one hundred and twenty horses and oxen. Nothing could have been better than the conduct of the men of 72nd and 79th Companies under these trying

circumstances. Not a single grumble or complaint was heard, although 72nd Company had been on outpost duty the previous night, and therefore altogether was more than forty-eight hours on continuous duty.

As Generals Pole-Carew and French were now following up the Boers, who were retreating in great haste on Middelburg, and as it was impossible to feed such a large force until railway communication with Pretoria could be restored, Lord Roberts decided that Sir Ian Hamilton, with his column, should return to Pretoria. He himself went back the same day. Lieutenant Dalrymple-Clark, who was suffering from peritonitis, also returned and went into hospital at Pretoria. He recovered, and shortly afterwards went to Ceylon with some prisoners. He then left the Rough Riders and became Captain in the Prince of Wales' Light Horse.

On July 27th the return journey to Pretoria was commenced, and that night the force halted at Bronkhorstspuit, where a large number of dead cattle were seen, which had perished in the storm. Pretoria was reached on July 30th, after an uneventful march. Numbers of Boers were reported to be about, but none were seen. As the force marched into the town they were reviewed by Lord Roberts, and must have looked very tattered and dirty. They camped on the north side of the town beyond West Poort, and here heard the news that Prinsloo, with over four thousand men and three guns, had surrendered. Thus ended 72 and 79th Company's first trek.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MEN and horses were only allowed one day's rest at Pretoria, as the force received orders to set off again with the whole of General Ian Hamilton's division, to relieve the garrison at Rustenburg. This place was under the command of General Baden Powell, and news had been received that it was besieged by about 3,000 Boers, and that the garrison could not hold out much longer. Besides the Yeomanry, Colonel Pilcher's force consisted of the Imperial Light Horse, New Zealanders, Queenslanders, Bushmen, and two pom-poms.

A start was made at 7 a.m. on August 1st, and the column first marched north of Pretoria to Wunderbaum Poort, which forms the entrance or gate to the Magaliesberg range of mountains. After passing through the poort, they turned to the left, and proceeded in a westerly direction. Firing was heard on the opposite side of the range, and about mid-day the Yeomanry, who were on the left flank of the advance guard, came into touch with a Boer patrol amongst some thick scrub. A farmhouse was observed at the foot of some hills, where there was evidently a Boer laager, and the pom-pom began shelling this at about 3,000 yards, making very good practice. Meanwhile, the Queenslanders moved up the hills on the left flank, hoping to get into touch with General Hamilton's division, which was operating on the other side of the mountains. As soon, however, as they showed themselves on the skyline, the pom-pom belonging to their

own force fired two shots at them, which, fortunately, did not take effect. The New Zealanders made a wide turning movement on the right flank, and crossing the front of the line, galloped up to a kopje near the farmhouse, and nearly succeeded in cutting the Boers off. The Yeomanry, who had now become the right flank, advanced and dismounted, and began a sharp engagement with the retreating Boers. Between 2,000 and 3,000 rounds of ammunition were expended by the Yeomanry before the enemy finally retired. Private Boese, of 72nd Company, was wounded, and Lieutenant Gore, of the same Company, had his horse killed. Two other horses belonging to the Rough Riders were also shot.

The force then advanced and took possession of the farm where the Boer laager had been. There was a lovely orange grove full of delicious ripe fruit, which was much appreciated by the weary men. There were also plenty of oats and hay for the horses. The force remained here for the night. It appeared afterwards that they should have pushed on at once and as quickly as possible, in order to cut off the retreat of the Boers, whom General Ian Hamilton had gone to dislodge from Ziligats Nek. Through some error these orders were not given and the force did not march until 7 a.m. next morning, and then only moved slowly. The New Zealanders had a very narrow escape during the morning, as the Boers were lying in ambush on a kopje, and then suddenly emptied their magazines at them, as they appeared at the short range of fifty yards, but there were no casualties.

Every kopje was then searched and occupied as the force moved along. The day was exceedingly hot, and there was no water for the horses. When they at last came up with General Ian Hamilton's division, it was



AFTER THE STORM OF JULY 25TH.



79TH COMPANY'S CAMP OUTSIDE PRETORIA.

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found that the latter had been successful in driving the Boers out of Ziligats Nek, but, in so doing, had had about forty casualties, chiefly in the Berkshire Regiment. He was much disappointed that Colonel Pilcher's force had not come up sooner. The enemy were reported to have gone north. The force bivouacked at a farm near Ziligats Nek, but at about 11 o'clock all were turned out to extinguish a tremendous veldt fire which was blazing fiercely, and threatening to destroy the camp. A strong breeze was blowing, and numbers of lateral fires had to be made before it could be stopped.

Next morning, August 3rd, the march was resumed at 6 a.m. The Crocodile River had to be crossed, and as the drift was a bad one, it took many hours to get all the transport safely over. The Yeomanry remained on the far side of the river to protect it during the crossing. The march was then continued to Bokfontein, where they rejoined General Ian Hamilton's division and bivouacked. He had just marched through Commando Nek, and had received a map by runner from General Baden Powell, showing how he was surrounded by 3,000 Boers and guns.

The whole force set off next morning, August 4th, under the impression that there was going to be a big fight. General Mahon moved with the Imperial Light Horse on the right flank. Many Boers were reported to be in the neighbourhood, but few were met with. It appeared that all the burghers had left their farms and rejoined their commandos, after having, in the first instance, handed in their obsolete weapons and taken the oath of neutrality! In spite of this few of the farms were interfered with or looted, except occasionally by the Kaffirs. Everything was conscientiously paid for, down to the very oranges eaten by the soldiers. This leniency proved to be a great mistake. If more severity had been

shown from the beginning, the war would have come to a much speedier end, and much money and many valuable lives would have been saved to the country.

During this day (August 4th) a flanking party from 72nd Company, while acting as patrol, was forgotten and not recalled. The men remained at their posts for forty-eight hours and then, realising that they had been overlooked, endeavoured to regain the column, with the result that they were captured by the Boers, who were always hovering about, ready to pounce upon small and weak parties. During the night two despatch riders (Packer and Loveland) were sent back to Pretoria, and performed their duty very cleverly and well.

Next day (August 5th) the force marched within fifteen miles of Rustenburg, the Yeomanry forming the advance guard. Oliphant's Nek was now in sight, and heliographic communication was opened with Colonel Kekewich, who was in command there. News was received that the siege of Rustenburg had been raised, and that General Baden Powell had gone out to the assistance of Colonel Hore, who, with his convoy, was being attacked at Eland's River. For some reason, doubtless well explained, neither he nor General Carrington, ever reached Colonel Hore, whose resistance, due to the splendid courage of his Australian troops, was one of the finest performances of the war.

While camp was being formed at a distance of about ten miles from Rustenburg, the Fife Yeomanry, under Captain Hodge, were sent out to capture a laager of cattle, which the Kaffirs reported on the hills. This turned out to be a cleverly arranged trap. After the Yeomen had gone about four miles, they got into some very thick scrub, and found the cattle laager hidden in a small kloof. The advance party approached it unmolested, but when Captain Hodge, with the rest of the

Squadron came up, the Boers, who were concealed in the scrub, opened a heavy fire upon them at a close range. Fortunately, however, they only succeeded in wounding a few horses. The squadron quickly galloped for the nearest cover, where they remained and sent back to camp for assistance. The rest of the Regiment immediately turned out, and were well on their way, when they were stopped by Colonel Pilcher, who considered it advisable to bring an Infantry Battalion and pom-poms to reconnoitre the position. By the time that this was thoroughly done, it was evident that the Boers had effected their retreat. The Regiment then advanced, released the Fife Squadron, burnt the Kaffirs' farm, and drove off the cattle. A tree was found full of bullet holes, showing the Boers had evidently been practising in order to get the exact range.

The next day was Bank Holiday, and the troops enjoyed a well deserved and welcome day's rest. Captain Lord Maitland, accompanied by Lieutenants Fauvel and Gore, rode into Rustenburg, and assisted in destroying a lot of Mauser ammunition there. He brought back a Mauser with him, which exploded somewhat unexpectedly in camp. On their way to Rustenburg they discovered some Boers tapping the telegraph, and intercepting Sir Ian Hamilton's messages to Lord Roberts. On August 7th the whole force began to retrace its steps towards Pretoria. The column was occasionally sniped at, but no damage was done. A very cold, windy night was passed at Bokport, and next evening the force bivouacked at their old quarters at Bokfontein. The horses were getting by this time extremely thin and used up. They were on very short rations, sometimes getting only 4lb. of oats a day. There was plenty of forage to be had in the neighbouring farms, but at this period it was not

allowed to be used. Later on all suspected farms were ordered to be cleared, and it would have been much wiser if these orders had been issued earlier in the war.

The column set out again on the morning of the 9th of August, as it was thought, for Pretoria. As soon, however, as they had passed through Commando Nek, they were halted, as news had just been received that De Wet had slipped past Lord Methuen, and was now expected to cross the Vaal and trek northwards. The force was ordered to co-operate in the work of intercepting him. They were not to march until further orders should be received. Camp was therefore formed, and here the force remained all the following day awaiting orders, but none came. In the early hours of August 11th, however, they were suddenly received, and a start was made at 4.30 a.m. The direction taken was between the Witwatersrandberg and the Magaliesberg Mountains. Early in the afternoon, about a hundred Boers were seen in front, and the column was halted and the guns galloped up, but before these could be brought into action, the Boers cleared off. The force halted at dark at Bultfontein, and here Major Brown, Dorset I.Y., who had gone to Pretoria for remounts, rejoined with two hundred and fifty horses.

Next day, August 12th, the march was continued in a westerly direction. A few sniping shots were fired during the morning, and later on the rearguard was attacked. 79th Company, who formed a rear flank guard, was engaged, but fortunately escaped without any casualties. The force encamped near the Poort of Zaholhoek, the Yeomanry forming the advanced picquets, and patrols. The Boers had been here in considerable numbers on the previous day, but by this time had scattered and driven their cattle off into the hills.

The following day, August 13th, General Mahon's force, which included the Yeomanry, was ordered to push on, and leave its transport, while some of his mounted troops, including 79th Company, were detached for service with General Ian Hamilton, who followed a short distance behind. The Yeomanry furnished the advanced and flanking guards, and captured some cattle belonging to the Boers. The Kaffirs, however, claimed these, and they were foolishly given up to them without question. In the evening, after arriving at the bivouacking ground, 72nd Company, which formed the right flank guard, had a slight brush with the Boers.

The march was resumed the following day at 6.30 a.m., and the force soon discovered the enemy's scouts, who were seen galloping away in the front. Towards mid-day, the advanced guard (the Dorsets) came into contact with the enemy. Lieutenant Digby was out on the right flank with a patrol, when he suddenly ran up against a party of Boers. These had by far the best of the situation, and at once commenced firing at the patrol, killing a horse. Shoeing-Smith Shreeve gallantly stopped and picked up the rider, and galloped off with him under a very heavy fire, the enemy being only about fifty yards off. The rest of the Battalion then went forward to support the Dorsets, and the Boers retired with some casualties. The Imperial Light Horse, who knew the country well, cleverly intercepted some snipers, killing two and wounding two more. Before camping that night at Quaggafontein, a column was observed in front, which turned out to be Kitchener's force, who were engaged in rounding up De Wet towards Oliphant's Nek under the impression that Colonel Kekewich was still holding it. That officer had, however, been withdrawn, though he had protested against the folly of such a step, and through some unaccountable mismanagement, the Pass was allowed to remain unguarded.

Next morning, August 15th, Colonel Pilcher's force moved forward and occupied the ground just vacated by Lord Kitchener. The country was very open, and in all directions the British Columns, under Methuen, Kitchener, Broadwood, Little, and Hart, could be seen advancing in pursuit of De Wet, and so close were the pursuers that the Boer and British Cape carts became intermingled. In the afternoon a junction was effected with Lord Methuen's force, and then intelligence was received that, owing to the extraordinary mistake of leaving Oliphant's Nek unguarded, De Wet had made his escape quite unopposed through the Pass!

It seems that he himself could not believe in his good fortune when he arrived there and found it unoccupied, thinking it must be a ruse on the part of the British. He called for five hundred volunteers to act as a forlorn hope, as he was fully convinced that it was a trap. There was no trap, however, and no opposition of any kind, and much to their astonishment, he and his men simply marched unmolested through the Pass, and succeeded in getting away to the hilly region of the Magaliesberg, where further pursuit was hopeless.



DOCTOR EXAMINING A WOUNDED TROOPER OF 72ND COMPANY.



LINKED HORSES

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AFTER De Wet's unexpected escape through Oliphant's Nek, General Ian Hamilton was ordered to follow him up. The march northwards was, therefore, resumed on August 16th, and the Pass reached during the afternoon. Here the force came into contact with De Wet's burghers, who were now holding the Nek. They could be seen quite plainly, and some shots were exchanged, but as it was too late to make a determined attack to recapture the Pass, the force retired for the night, and camped in a very pretty valley near by. The sun rose next morning on a charming scene. Tents were dotted about all over the hills and in the rosy morning light the camp looked most picturesque.

72nd Company had occupied a high hill on the left flank during the night, and here they were left while the rest of the force advanced to attack the Boers and drive them out of the Nek. The rest of the Yeomanry, under Colonel Colvin, were instructed to protect the right flank, which they did by occupying a range of hills. The Imperial Light Horse worked round the left flank of the enemy. Presently, the Infantry (A. and S. Highlanders and the Berkshire Regiment), advanced to the attack, the Cow gun and Elswick Battery shelling the position, and setting the hills on fire. The Boers replied with rifle fire and a maxim, and after about two hours fighting, when the Infantry were beginning to climb the hills, the Boers, who were only De Wet's rearguard, suddenly cleared off,

and then the whole force—infantry, guns, mounted troops and transport—poured through the Pass.

There were two or three casualties during the fight and one Yeoman (Sergeant Richardson) who had somehow got into the infantry firing line, was very badly hit and died soon afterwards. The Medical Officer, Captain Walcott, who had now rejoined the Battalion, went down into the firing line, and rendered every possible assistance. Two men of the Imperial Light Horse, who had pressed forward to the attack, found themselves in a cross fire between the Boers' rifles and the shells from their own guns, and were unable to move. They managed, however, to escape, although their horses were killed. After passing through the Nek General Mahon's force pressed on to Rustenburg, about eight miles further on, where they halted. They found that the Boers had vacated the town, leaving the wounded in the hospital. General Hamilton's force halted nearer Oliphant's Nek.

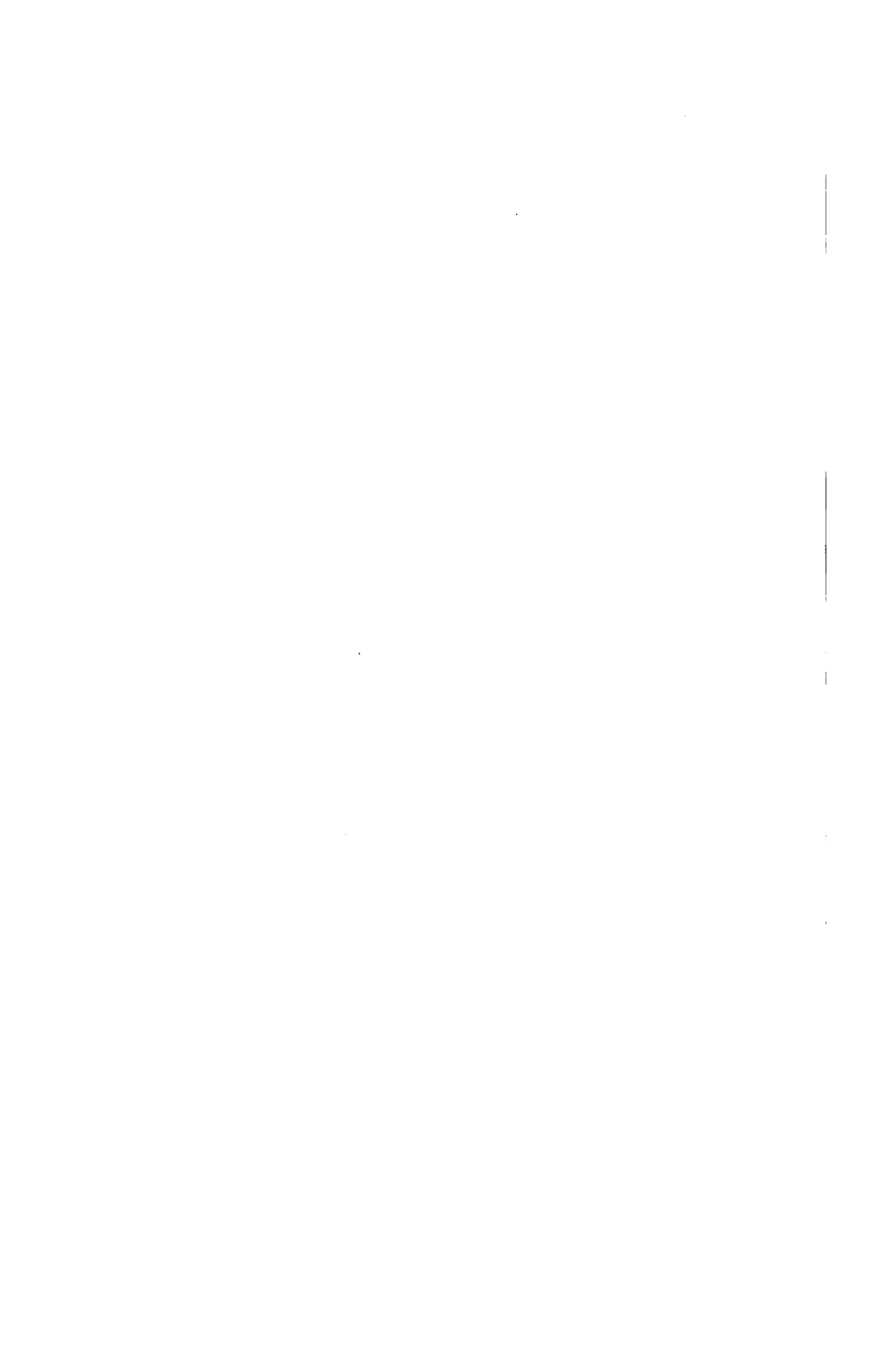
On August 18th, at 6 a.m., the column again took up the pursuit of De Wet, proceeding in a N.E. direction. The Yeomanry formed the advanced guard, acting independently on General Ian Hamilton's left flank. About mid-day a range of hills, which formed the boundary of the Bushveldt was reached. The Boers had trekked through these hills on the previous day, and now their rearguard opened fire from the heights on the advanced scouts of 72nd Company.

Some native runners, who were probably Boer spies, gave the information that the Boer camp was only a few miles further on, and said that a hundred British prisoners were there. All the natives in the neighbouring villages were much excited, and crowded up on the kopjes, evidently expecting to see a big battle. The force did not, however, enter the Bushveldt, but turned south, and rejoined General Hamilton's division in the afternoon.



From a sketch by Captain Chudwick.

COMMANDO NEK.



The day had been oppressively hot, and every one was very tired. At 4 o'clock, however, an order came to saddle up at once in order to make a forced march on Crocodile River, where De Wet's laager was supposed to be. No transport was taken, and no smoking or talking was allowed on the march. The night became very dark, there being no moon. A halt was made at 11 o'clock, and the force off-saddled until 4 a.m., but it was too cold to sleep, and the men had no blankets.

The march was then resumed to Commando Nek, which was reached at about 8 o'clock in the morning of August 19th. Here one or two Boer patrols were encountered, but there was no sign of a laager. After a short halt the march was continued to Ruddiekopjes, about eight miles further on, and here the Boer Column was discovered trekking away. Their transport was shelled, and a wagon which had broken down was captured, while some hay was found which was very badly wanted for the horses.

The Boer rearguard still held the Ruddiekopjes, and their position was a very strong one, extending for about a mile. The New Zealanders advanced to attack them, and a sharp engagement ensued. In this attack the Colonials lost two killed (one of whom was an officer) and five wounded. One trooper, whose horse was shot, pretended to be dead, and was put into an ambulance, from which he managed to escape. Captain Walcott went out to the assistance of the wounded with an ambulance, but was detained by the Boers for three hours, after which he was allowed to return with the wounded. Meanwhile, the guns of the force shelled the Boer position, while the Yeomanry opened a heavy rifle fire on them. During the afternoon the force recrossed the Drift, and marched nine miles back to the camp, from which it had started

in the morning. No advantage was, therefore, gained by the reconnaissance ; or if so, it was lost by this retirement. Men and horses were exceedingly fatigued, and this retreat gave the force an additional sixteen miles march.

The next day, August 20th, the force proceeded in the same order to the same place, after having been joined by General Ian Hamilton's column, which had had a very trying march, having accomplished forty miles in thirty hours. As soon as Ruddiekopjes were reached, shelling began again. The force then moved forward into the Bushveldt, pushing the Boers before them, but some of the enemy still occupied the hills to the right rear, and 79th Company, who were acting on this flank, came under a very heavy fire. The troops advanced for about six miles into the Bushveldt, and then camped in a place where there was no water except some very muddy stuff. It was reported that the Boers were trekking north as fast as they could go.

On the following day, August 21st, after a great deal of indecision and hesitation, it was decided to march in a N.E. direction to Zoutpan. This route necessitated a march through a waterless district, through the Bushveldt. The force halted at mid-day, and watered at a river near Noitgedacht. Here General Hamilton's Column and the infantry remained, while General Mahon's force pushed on during the afternoon, and arrived at Zoutpan after dark, having had a rather tiring march of twenty-five miles. Zoutpan was found to be a large salt pit, where a solitary Englishman had been left in charge. He stated that the Boers, numbering three thousand, with 12 guns, had left this place on the previous day. During the night, De Wet, with a small escort, slipped back to the Magaliesberg.

The pursuit through the Bushveldt was resumed next morning, and a Boer patrol was captured. The days were now exceedingly hot, but the nights cold. In the afternoon Stinkwater was reached, where the force halted. The march through the bush was continued on the 23rd to Cyphergill, where only a little black muddy water was to be had. The Boers were just a little way on in front, and a French ambulance was overtaken labelled, "Pour nos amis les Boers." It was allowed to pass unmolested, but about a dozen Boer prisoners were captured.

A very high wind was blowing next morning, and the dust was most annoying. The force marched on towards Warm Baths, but halted on the way at a Kaffir village called Woodhulp, where a conference of the Generals was held. Colonel Colvin meanwhile paid a visit to the Headman of the village, who informed him that General Baden Powell had arrived there on the previous day, and shelled the Boers' rearguard, releasing the British prisoners, who numbered about a hundred. He was still pursuing the enemy in a northerly direction. At the conference of the Generals it was decided that the force should abandon the pursuit of the Boers, and proceed direct to Warm Baths. The enemy were now very much scattered in front, and thoroughly disorganised. The men and horses of the force had by this time become much reduced, as both had been on exceedingly short rations for a considerable time, and the work had been very severe. The thorny bushes of the veldt had also proved most destructive to the men's clothing, and the majority were in rags. The march was accordingly resumed direct to Warm Baths, where the force encamped. There was a hotel here which, however, contained nothing but coffee! Round it were about two hundred baths in sheds, which the troops immediately took possession of. The water in the baths, supplied by natural springs, was almost boiling.

Next day, August 25th, the force enjoyed a rest in camp, which was very welcome. Captain Lord Maitland and Lieutenant Wynne proceeded to Pretoria with some Boer prisoners (including Field Cornets) in a train which consisted of two open trucks drawn by bullocks! This train was rather difficult to manage, but they only had one collision!

Orders were received somewhat unexpectedly for the force to return as quickly as possible to Pretoria, in order to proceed east again towards Komati Poort. Reveille accordingly sounded at 2.30 a.m. on August 26th, but owing to the Artillery losing their way in the dark and missing the rendezvous, the force did not get away until three hours later. They had then a long march of twenty-five miles to Piemaars Station, which was reached early in the afternoon. Here they caught up the train drawn by bullocks, which had started on the previous day.

On the 27th the force marched another twenty miles to Waterval. The Yeomanry formed the rearguard, and an attack was expected at any moment from Commandant Erasmus, who was known to be in the neighbourhood. No alarms, however, occurred. The force was now marching much faster and covering longer distances than it had done previously; if this despatch had been used in the pursuit of De Wet he might possibly have been caught. At Waterval the whole of General Ian Hamilton's force was encamped.

Next morning, August 28th, the Yeomanry marched off at 6 a.m. to clear the road for the rest of the division. Pretoria, which was about nine miles distant, was reached at 9 a.m., and the remains of the Battalion went into camp outside the Race Course, thus ending their second trek.

The horses were now thoroughly exhausted owing to starvation and hard work, and during the last day's

march most of them had to be led. 72nd Company were reduced to twelve mounted men, the others being obliged to lead their horses and nurse them as well as possible under the circumstances, but many of the horses had died. The state of 79th Company was almost as bad. All the men were in rags, as the thorns of the Bushveldt had torn their clothing and boots to pieces. It had been a hard trek, and for poor food, bad water, little sleep, and general discomfort, was one of the most arduous periods of work the Rough Riders went through. Sometimes, when fagged out after a long day, and getting settled down to fires and food, an order would come to march in half an hour. Some of the men had probably been on picquet the previous night. Then followed a night march. It was impossible to keep awake, and during a halt many a man just slipped out of the saddle, and slept beneath his horse. The troopers were as worn as their horses; indeed, it was often a hard job to lift the saddle on to the horse's back.

Pretoria was found to be full of troops, and columns kept coming in from all directions, some preparing to go north, and others to go east. The Boers were reported to be trekking away eastwards towards Lydenburg.

After Warm Baths was evacuated Piemaars River was made the most northerly point of defence, as the Bushveldt, became most unhealthy in the wet weather.

Colonel Pilcher was now ordered to rejoin his regiment on promotion, while Major Cradock, who was second in command of the New Zealanders, was promoted to succeed Colonel Pilcher. He was a most popular officer, and did exceedingly well. General Mahon's force was ordered to draw remounts, and refit as quickly as possible. The final separation of 72nd and 79th Companies now took place, so from this point we must follow their doings separately.

79TH COMPANY.



CHAPTER XXIX.

79TH COMPANY.

THE Battalion Staff and 79th Company only enjoyed one day's rest at Pretoria, as orders were received on August 29th that one of the Squadrons of Yeomanry was to be mounted with all available horses taken from the other Squadrons, and march early the following morning with General Mahon's force to join General French at Carolina. The remainder of the Battalion was to follow as soon as remounts could be obtained.

79th Company, under Captain Piercy, was selected to start first on this expedition. The rest of the force consisted of Imperial Light Horse, New Zealanders, 3rd Mounted Infantry, and M Battery, R.H.A. The Yeomanry set out in excellent spirits on August 30th, although a very tedious march was before them over ground which had already been traversed. The first day's trek brought the force to Donkerhoek, and the next to Jakalsfontein. On the third day a halt was made beyond Balmoral. Here hundreds of carcasses of the poor beasts which had died during the terrible storm on July 25th, were still to be seen lying where they had fallen.

It was soon evident that those who had been left behind at Pretoria could not overtake or rejoin General Mahon's force. It turned out afterwards that, as soon as they were refitted, 72nd Company were sent out to join

General Clements, under whom they saw a considerable amount of active service. General Mahon marched on through the coal district, over fine, open, undulating country, which gradually ascended, until an altitude of nearly 6,000 feet was reached. The air was very bracing, almost too much so, as it was difficult to sleep at night. A halt was made about seven miles from Middelburg, and early on the morning of September 3rd the troops rode into the town. The Suffolk Regiment, under Colonel Mackenzie, joined the column here, and marched out with the force to join General French's Division. Several trains of released prisoners from Noitgedacht passed, going to Pretoria, one of which contained some Yeomen belonging to the Battalion. The next halt was made at Rondebosch, just beyond Middelburg, and the force then continued its march to Woufontein, which is 6,500 feet above sea-level. The cold here was intense, and a very keen wind was blowing.

Early in the morning (September 5th) guns were heard, which at first were thought to be those of General Buller's force. After having started on the march, however, and proceeded for about four miles, news arrived that an outpost held by the Canadians was being heavily attacked. All mounted troops, therefore, were detached, and left the infantry and transport to proceed, while they marched back for about nine miles to the assistance of the Canadians, who were occupying a farm. As soon as General Mahon's column approached the Boers quickly cleared off. They had succeeded in surprising a Canadian outpost of six men, and had then pressed their attack on the main position. The Canadians, however, repulsed them after two hours' fighting, and drove them off with only a few casualties. The Boers, who had two guns with them, then shelled a passing train, fortunately without effect; after which they finally retired on the approach of

the relieving force. The Yeomanry and other mounted troops returned to their transport, and halted that evening at Blinkpan, having had a very hard and trying day.

Next morning, September 6th, another convoy was sighted about three miles off to the left, and shortly afterwards the force came across Colonel Spens' Brigade of Shropshires and Royal Artillery. The Komati River was crossed at its head, and then a short halt was made. A fierce veldt fire occurred here and the transport was very nearly lost as a strong wind was blowing at the time and the grass was very high. During the afternoon the force reached Carolina, where a junction was effected with General French, who was found to be encamped there with the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Cavalry Brigades, the regiments of which were, however, much under strength. The tracks of General Buller's army were passed on the way, and many graves were seen of soldiers who had been killed during his advance.

General Mahon's men now enjoyed two day's rest in camp, which was badly needed. A longer delay here was impossible, owing to scarcity of provisions. The town was quite deserted, but would, of course, be reoccupied immediately upon the departure of the British. It was supposed to be the most healthy place in the Transvaal, but the surrounding country is most uninteresting. A number of mules and horses were lost there through eating the deadly tulp (tulip grass).

Captain Atkins, Staff Officer to Colonel Cradock, rejoined the force at Carolina, after having been to Pretoria to try to bring on the rest of the Battalion. He found, however, on reaching Pretoria, that these Companies had already been diverted elsewhere. On his return by train he had a very unpleasant experience, as the engine was blown off the rails by dynamite, on the south side of Balmoral. The Boers then attacked in the

dark, but retired when they found that there were armed men in the train. Captain Atkins afterwards had to ride thirty miles alone through a very dangerous country to reach the column.

General French now invited Colonel Colvin to join his Staff, which he eventually did. Major Anderson and Captain Lord Maitland joined General Mahon's Staff, while later on Lieutenant Wynne became Transport Officer to Colonel Spens' Brigade.

During the two days' stay at Carolina, the weather was very bitter, and all felt much relieved when orders came to march for Barberton. The force was warned that they would probably be attacked on the way.

A start was made early on Sunday morning, Sept. 9th, when the whole of General French's Division marched out of Carolina, accompanied by General Mahon's force. General Buller was now at Lydenburg, and Generals Pole-Carew and Hutton were marching parallel to General French—their objective being Komati Poort.

The country soon became very broken, and at about 10 o'clock firing was heard in front. The whole force was hurried on, and by the time 79 Company were up the guns were in position, and had commenced to shell the Boers, who were occupying the Pass of Rooihoek, about 2,000 yards away on the opposite side of the valley. All the transport was beautifully parked in a convenient basin in the hills, and everything looked more like a preparation for a race meeting than for a battle. The Yeomanry were placed on the left flank with the Queenslanders, and some Mounted Infantry. They occupied a ridge about 1,600 yards from the Boer position, and were ordered to open fire and divert the enemy, while the Imperial Light Horse made a flank attack upon the enemy's right. This they were unable to do, as the Boers



From a sketch by l'ascout Mailand.

ROAD TO THE NELHOBETE PASS.

held an exceedingly strong position on the Roodehoege ridge, which commanded the whole of our left flank. They had also the exact range, and from their higher position bullets fell thick and fast amongst those on the ridge. Trooper Ansell, of 79th Company, was the first to be hit, and fell with a furrow cut out of his head by a bullet. Soon afterwards Trooper Escott was shot through the head. The poor fellow lingered for a couple of days, and then died without having regained consciousness. He was buried at the foot of the Nelhoege Pass, some distance further on. He was Captain Piercy's servant, and was a first rate man in all respects.

When the attack on the enemy's right flank failed, the infantry were ordered to make a direct frontal attack on the Boer position. The Suffolks and Shropshires, therefore, steadily advanced over a front of about a mile, under a withering fire. When the Boers saw that this did not check them, and that, in spite of everything they continued to advance, they found themselves at last obliged to run for it, though their position seemed to all appearances impregnable.

As they slipped away by twos and threes, shells and bullets poured all round them, and it was extraordinary how so many managed to escape. They had some fifty casualties, but they succeeded in getting nearly all of them away.

Sergeant Wickham, of 79th Company, finding it rather slow on the ridge, joined the Suffolks in their advance, and was shot through the wrist while looking at the enemy through his glass. This N.C.O., who had previously served in the 10th Hussars, was shortly afterwards invalided home, where he recovered from his wound. He then received a commission in the 22nd Battalion I.Y., returned to South Africa, was promoted Captain, and finally killed while gallantly leading his men in action.

By 4 o'clock in the afternoon the position was gained, and then the whole division moved forward over the Pass, and down a steep descent of two miles on the other side. Cavalry and guns pursued the enemy until nightfall. The Boer guns also continued to shell the force as it advanced, but without any effect. 79th Company remained in the rear, and camped on the side of the hill. It was very cold and windy here, but an early start was made at 3.30 next morning, when they joined the advance guard again.

Colonel Colvin now finally joined General French's Staff, and was ordered to assist Major Hunter Weston, D.A.A.G., in the direction of the transport. This was rather a difficult business, which required most careful management, the country being mountainous, and the drifts very awkward. The whole transport was ten miles in length, and took so long in crossing some drifts that on this day, September 10th, the force only advanced seven miles. A very nice camp was then reached near water. On the following day there were even more difficult drifts to be crossed, the last of which was the Komati River.

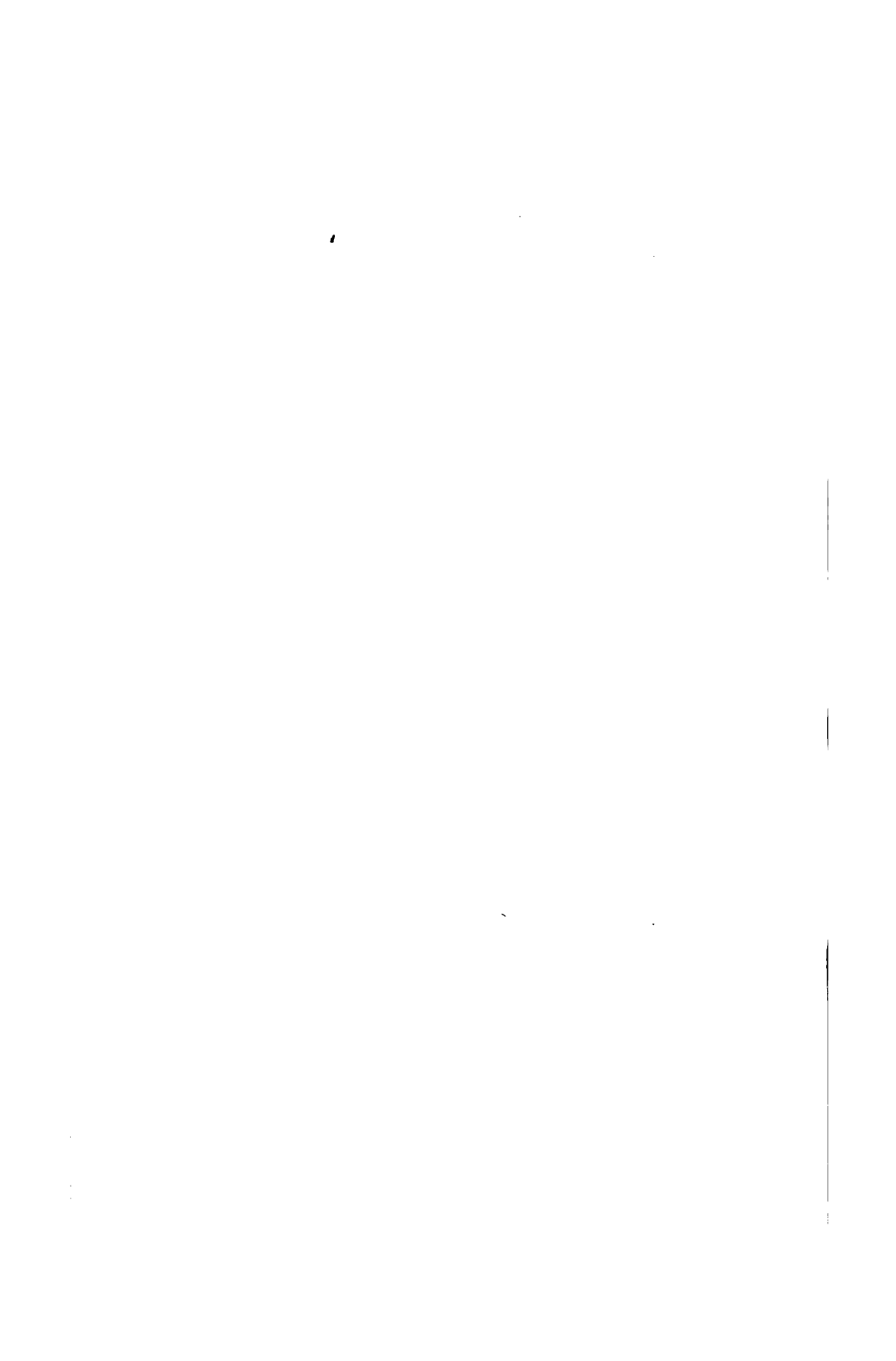
The last two days' march had been over fairly level country, but now the mountains appeared again in front, and General French and Staff rode forward to reconnoitre the position, which was held by the enemy. They found that the road ascended over a mile at a gradient of nearly 35 degrees, while it was commanded on all sides by high mountains. The position would be almost impossible to take if held by a determined enemy. That night, General French occupied a small store house in the rear of the camp. The front of the bivouac was occupied by General Mahon's force, and the 1st and 3rd Cavalry brigades, who had orders to advance at daybreak.



From a sketch by Viscount Maitland.

AT THE TOP OF THE NELHORGTE PASS.

(The dots in the distance represent a Boer Convoy, with about 1,000 horsemen, retreating across the mountains).



As soon as day dawned on the morning of September 12th, the cavalry set out and made a wide flanking movement to the right, occupying the mountains on that side. General Mahon's force, consisting of the Imperial Light Horse, Queenslanders, 79th Company I.Y., and some M.I., occupied the mountains to the left, while the infantry, Royal Horse Artillery, and the Cow gun, under Captain Bearcroft, R.N., advanced in the centre. General French and his Staff also rode forward with the latter. The Cavalry, under General Gordon, got round so quickly on the right, that they surprised the Boers at breakfast, and it was some time before they recovered sufficiently to make any serious opposition.

The main Boer position, however, was such a strong one that it had to be shelled for a considerable time before they showed any signs of giving way. The infantry then made a direct assault, and at last the enemy began to retire. The guns were now hauled up to the top of the Nelhoegte Pass with the greatest difficulty, so as to shell their retreat. The Boers, 1,000 to 1,500 in numbers, could be seen quite clearly in this rare atmosphere, retiring along a road on the other side of the valley, but almost too far off for the guns to reach them. They were heading towards Swaziland. The Imperial Light Horse pursued them, and hustled them a good deal, and a number of wagons were captured. The Boers only showed sufficient fight to allow their convoy to get away. The first gun at the top of the hill found the range at the fourth shot (4,650 yards), and it placed several shots straight in the middle of the road. This compelled the Boers to abandon five wagons, and seek shelter behind the shoulder of a big kopje. They were very clever in crossing the exposed bit of road. Waiting until the gun had fired, they galloped across in parties of ten or fifteen. This was good while only one gun was firing, but in a

quarter of an hour a second gun reached the top, and then shells fell in their midst, and they suffered.

Most of the troops moved up into the Pass that night, but it was too late to attempt to get the transport up, so it remained below. There was a magnificent view from the top of the Pass, but it was very cold, and the wind was piercing. In spite of this, all slept soundly after the day's hard work.

Next morning, September 13th, General French determined to make a dash for Barberton, and took with him the Cavalry Brigade, 79th Company I.Y., and one battery R.H.A. The horses were, of course, very much exhausted, and Barberton was thirty-five miles off. There was, however, a short cut across the hills which saved about four miles. This track was very narrow, and it was necessary to lead in single file the whole way down the mountains—a distance of about five miles.

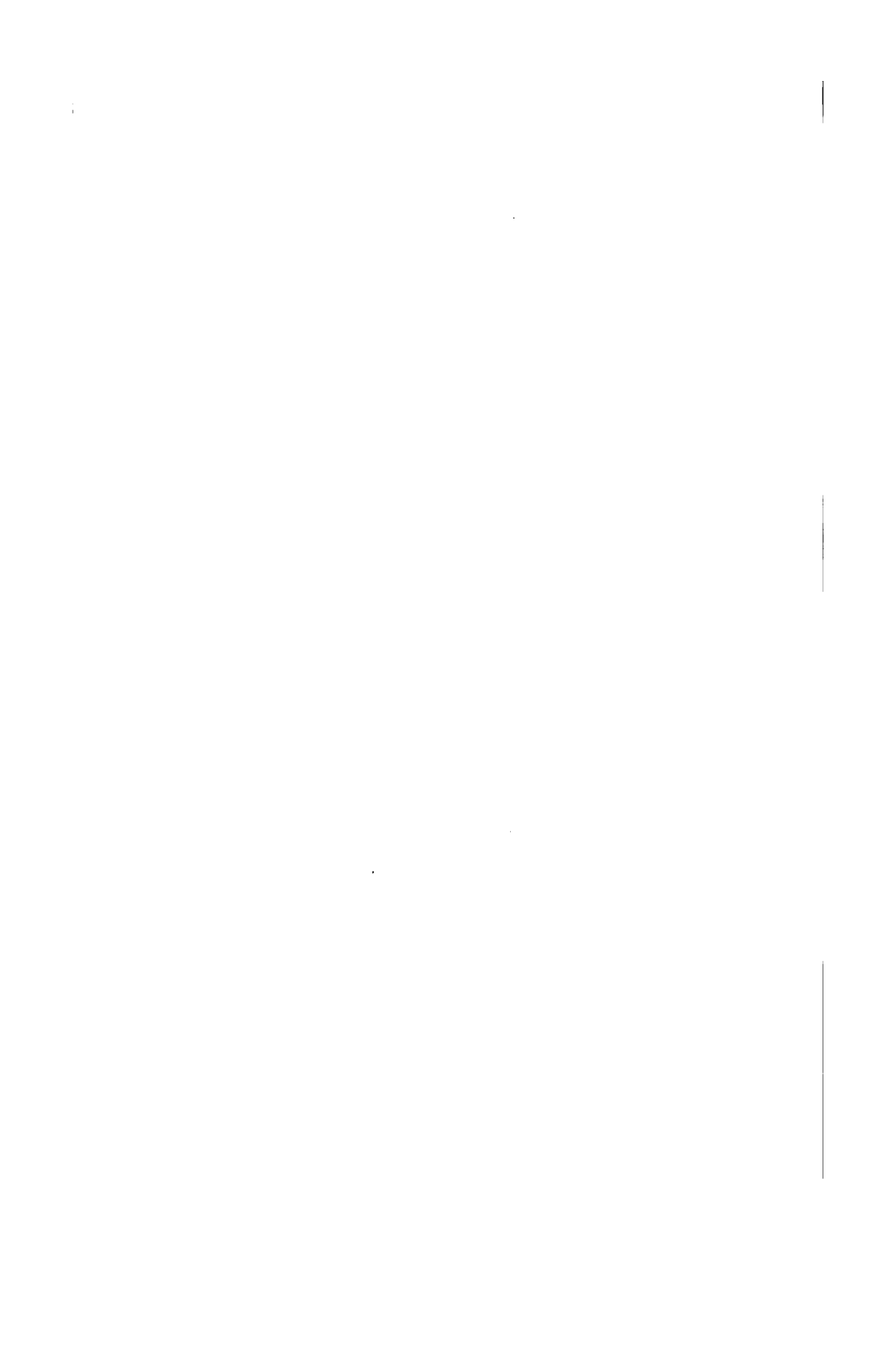
The Boers, meanwhile, were afraid that their retreat was being cut off, and retired along a road which ended abruptly over what was virtually a precipice. Over this place the wagons had to be lowered by ropes. If the Boers had been followed up, a big haul would most probably have been made. As it was, a number of prisoners were taken, and thousands of sheep and a large number of bullocks were captured. These were very welcome, as by this time food and forage were nearly exhausted.

General French was most successful in surprising Barberton, and entered the town with little opposition. The Landrost, Mr. Van de Post, became very excited on this occasion, and threatened the General with a revolver. The place was found to be full of supplies, which the Boers had been unable to get away; the Scots Greys, under Colonel Scobell, succeeded in intercepting the last train going out, and secured £10,000 in specie. Captain Piercy and 79th Company, though greatly reduced in



From a sketch by Viscum Maitland.

BARBERTON.



numbers, had the privilege of being included in this dashing exploit of General French's. The Company was employed in searching the town. The female inhabitants were very hostile, and Lieutenant Cookson had rather an inglorious encounter with an indignant Boer Vrouw armed with a revolver.

Barberton is situated directly under a range of gold-bearing mountains, and from them the enterprising Boers thought they would have a fine opportunity of sniping into the town when the British were in occupation; a number of shots were fired, one of which wounded a sentry. General French thereupon issued a proclamation declaring that if another shot was fired, he would immediately bombard the town, regardless of consequences. Upon this the troublesome firing at once ceased.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHILE General French and the Cavalry were engaged at Barberton, General Mahon's force had remained behind in the Nelhoegte Pass. When the commandos which still remained in the vicinity of the Pass heard of the capture of Barberton by General French, they sent in to say they would surrender if they were not sent to Ceylon. The answer was that they must surrender unconditionally, or fight. Colonel Colvin, Major Hunter Weston, D.A.A.G., and the other officers of the Staff, were very busily engaged in getting the transport over, and for fifty-five continuous hours their work was incessant. All wagons had to be treble teamed, while fatigue parties were stationed along the road day and night to assist. The mule teams worked during the day, and the oxen at night. It was cruel work, and many of the poor beasts died. Occasionally some gear would break, causing the wagon to go tumbling back down the hill. One tonga which belonged to Lumsden's Horse, reached the top safely, laden with ammunition. Suddenly, however, on reaching a decline, it took charge of the mules, nearly sweeping them off their feet. They went at an alarming pace for some 200 yards, when luckily a big boulder stopped them, and sent tonga and mules flying into the air, and on reaching the ground again there was an explosion as if a lyddite shell had burst! Only one of the mules was disabled as a result of this.

On September 15th, having got all the transport safely to the top of the hill, General Mahon's column

began to march to Barberton, leaving Colonel Spens and his brigade to hold the Pass, with Captain Bearcroft and his Cow gun. Lieutenant Wynne was attached to Colonel Spens' brigade as Transport Officer. The Cow gun was the last to reach the top of the Pass, and Captain Bearcroft managed it exceedingly well. He dismounted the gun and put it in a wagon, and had it dragged up by about fifty oxen.

Colonel Colvin now rode alone into Barberton along the route taken by General French. He reached the town in the evening, and after reporting himself, met a number of officers who had just been released. These included Colonel Spragge and officers, 13th Company I.Y, taken at Lindley. Also Colonel Roberts, taken at Ziligats Nek.

On September 17th, Colonel Colvin, accompanied Major Hunter Weston on a pioneer train in order to explore the railway which runs from Barberton to Kaap Minden Junction for Delagoa Bay. Fifty-three engines had been taken at Barberton, and all ranks were now being searched for engine drivers and fitters. Every one who had the most rudimentary knowledge of engineering was put on the railway. The pioneer train consisted of an engine and two trucks. The Kaap River was crossed in safety by a big bridge over "Joes Luck," which had not been interfered with, but when Avoca Bridge was reached it was found to have been destroyed two days previously. Avoca is a mining centre, but most of the houses were found to be deserted. The Sheba mine is the principal one. Several Englishmen were here.

On the return journey to Barberton, which was uphill, the engine behaved very badly, and at last, when just two miles from Barberton, it refused absolutely to go any further. General Pole-Carew's division was met at Nord Kaap. They had just marched from Knaapsehoek, and

were on their way to Komati Poort. The Boers were retreating rapidly along a road called French Bobs, which led over another long hill with a precipitous descent on the further side. It was said that they were utterly demoralised, and wished to surrender on condition that they would not be sent out of the country. This report was most probably true. The Imperial Light Horse followed them for some distance, and took a number of prisoners, but it was not considered advisable to pursue them further. Eventually they all managed to make their way back to the Orange River Colony, working back via Ermelo and Carolina.

On hearing the report brought back by Colonel Colvin and Major Hunter Weston, General French decided to remain at Barberton until the railway should be repaired, in order that the engines here and at Avoca, which altogether numbered over a hundred, might be released. All the rolling stock had been diverted on to the Selate Railway, and reached along it for about seven miles. Colonel Colvin was given the direction of the railway construction at Avoca, and took with him Major Anderson as Quarter-Master and Paymaster, Captain Lord Maitland as railway staff officer, and Lieutenants Woodhouse and Wright (who were released prisoners belonging to the 13th I.Y.), as executive and construction officers. Major Hunter Weston superintended the engineering.

They left Barberton on September 18th, and proceeded to Avoca, accompanied by the rest of the Battalion Staff. A deserted hotel was found which accommodated the party, and here they remained until October 1st. The work was found to be exceedingly interesting. The diversion laid out by Major Hunter Weston was about two and a half miles long, and with some difficulty about two hundred Swazis were obtained, who worked splen-

didly at a cutting. The Suffolk Regiment was also employed, but the weather was too hot for them to work, except early in the morning and late in the evening. The men of the Volunteer Service Company of the Suffolks, among whom were several Cambridge undergraduates, worked bravely as navvies. One of them, son of a wealthy banker in the Eastern Counties, on being asked how he liked his rations, said that the one thing they most wanted was lard to cook their meat with. They had, however, found an excellent substitute for this in the "Dubbin," which was issued for softening their boots! Tools and gangers were obtained from the neighbouring mines. The Swazis were very fine looking men, and worked excellently. Every morning, when work commenced, they would rush to the spot, brandishing their picks and shovels. Then to the sound of a rhythmical chant all the picks would fall together, and this was continued unceasingly throughout the day. The work progressed very rapidly, and on September 27th, the construction train arrived, and commenced laying the railway.

As the work was now practically over, Colonel Colvin received instructions to collect all the natives available, and march with Colonel MacKenzie and the Suffolk Regiment, to the Devil's Kontour, in order to repair the road there, and prepare it for General French, who intended to march his men back that way over the mountains to Machadodorp. The natives were not very willing to go so far, and Colonel Colvin only succeeded in getting about ninety, but these were sufficient for the purpose.

Meanwhile, at Barberton, 79th Company received instructions to hand over what horses they had to the New Zealanders, and entrain for Pretoria. These orders were carried out, but on reaching Machadodorp the Company was stopped, and some remounts found for them on which to patrol the country.

There were a number of Boers about in this neighbourhood, and on October 6th, when a patrol of 79th Company was out, they came upon a party of the enemy, who immediately retired. Trooper Ryder, however, insisted upon pursuing them alone, although his comrades tried hard to dissuade him. As he did not return, the patrol set out to search for him, and after some little time found his body with four bullet holes in it. One of these showed that the rifle had been fired at very close range. There were also twenty expended cartridges found by his side. The poor fellow was at once buried on the spot where he had fallen.

Colonel Colvin and the Suffolks left Avoca on October 1st, and proceeded in a N.W. direction to the Devil's Kontour. The heat and dust on the march were very trying, and towards evening it blew a regular gale. The Swazis were most useful in assisting the transport over the drifts.

Next day the march over the mountains was continued, and in the afternoon the celebrated Devil's Kontour was reached. Here the little force camped half way up the mountain, and from this spot had a magnificent view over a wide valley, looking towards Barberton, which was about twenty miles off. The advanced guard of General French's Division, consisting of Carabiniers and Engineers, now arrived.

The weather was much colder here, and inclined to be wet, and the first night in camp a terrific storm broke, which lasted on and off for twelve hours. Every one was drenched through, and the road became utterly impassable for traffic. Three men of the Royal Artillery were killed by lightning while on the march. As soon as the storm ceased and work became possible, the road was divided for repairs—the Swazis taking the upper half and the Suffolk Regiment the lower half. All worked

steadily and well, and the road was quickly put into good order. Captain Lord Maitland and Lieutenant Wynne directed the transport, as soon as it was dry enough, and with Colonel Colvin and the rest of the Battalion Staff, took up their abode in a little half-way house on the side of the mountains.

The "Devil's Kontour" is about 3,000 feet high, and there is a little village called Knaapsehoek at the top. A quantity of alluvial gold is found in the streams which run down the sides. Large herds of cattle were to be seen here, and the vegetation was most luxuriant and lovely. Everything grew rapidly after the heavy rain. The horses began to pick up considerably, but numbers of the transport mules and oxen died on the road.

General French's Cavalry Brigade now arrived, and marched up the mountains. Most of the transport had already been got up, and nothing further remained to be done to the road, so Colonel Colvin was ordered to proceed with the Battalion Staff and the Suffolk Regiment to Godwan Station en route for Pretoria. The natives were to be paid off at Godwan, but about forty of these were afraid to come any further, and preferred to return without their pay rather than risk marching so far over the mountains. They were most distrustful, as numbers of Boers were still hanging round the hills, hidden away in inaccessible kloofs.

On October 5th the party set out and marched to Godwan. They managed to upset a bullock wagon with all the tools over the cliff, but it was quickly recovered and righted, and it was most extraordinary how very little damage was sustained in a fall of over thirty feet. General French met Colonel Colvin on the way, and was most complimentary in his thanks for the work which had been done, which was naturally very gratifying to all concerned.

The following day the natives were assembled at Godwan, and paid off in full and a little over. They advanced in fours hand in hand, and as soon as all had received their money they sang a song composed for the occasion, describing with much gesticulation how the British officers had come from far away over the seas and how they would now soon be going back, how brave they all were, and how generous, paying even more than was expected. A dance and chorus concluded this curious and picturesque scene.

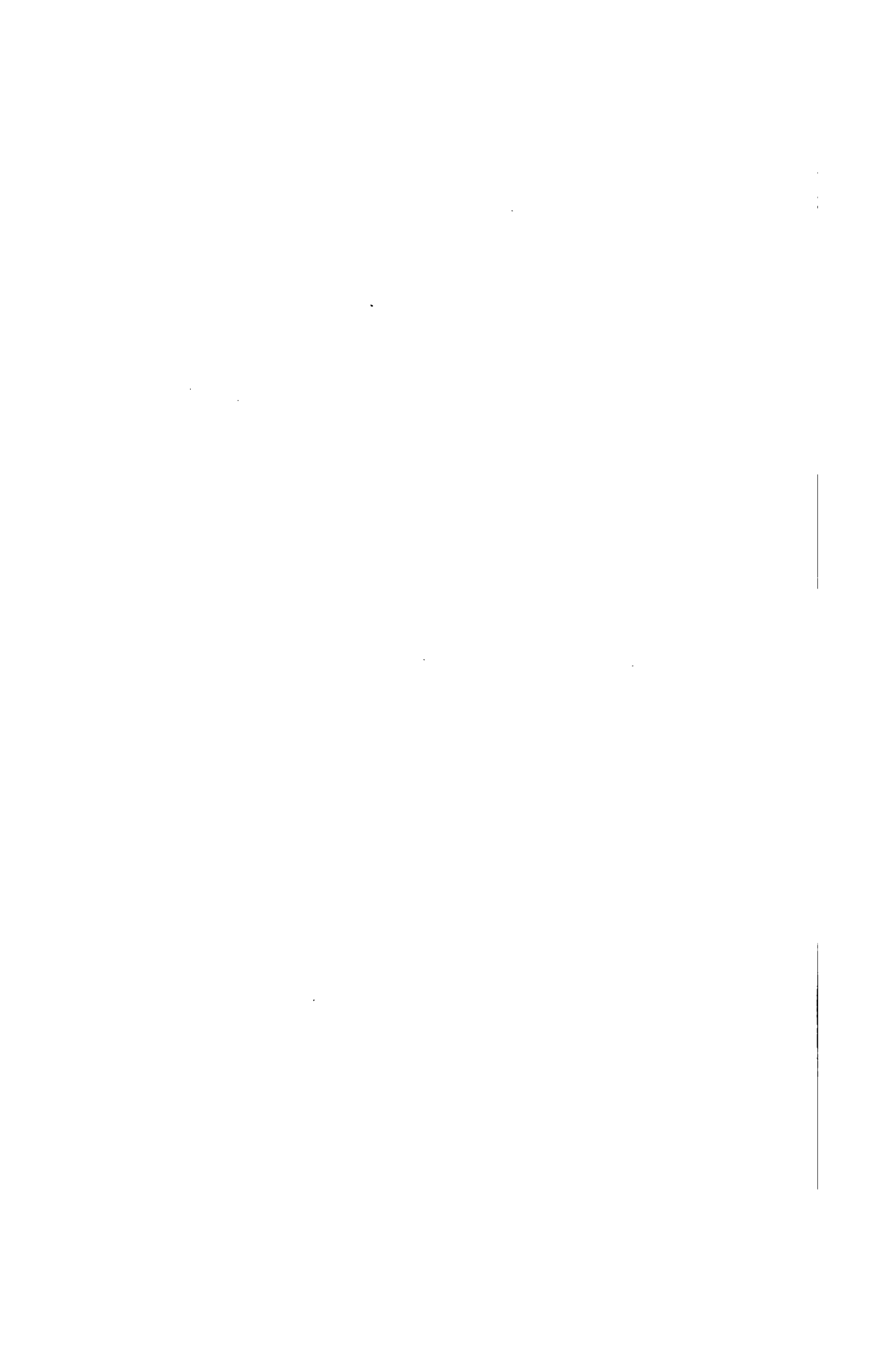
Colonel Colvin and the Battalion Staff were lucky in assuring an empty truck into which they crowded with all their servants and luggage. The transport was to go by road, so they took final leave at the Station of the great wagon known as "Noah's Ark," which had hitherto carried all their kit and belongings. It was drawn by a splendid team of black oxen, which Lieutenant Wynne had cared for most tenderly, and which had accompanied the Staff on most of their treks up to this time.

General Mahon and Prince Alexander of Teck went with Colonel Colvin as far as Machadodorp, where they left in order to join General French, and marched with him on his harassing journey to Pretoria. The train passed through Noitgedacht where Lieutenants Woodhouse and Wright, with the British prisoners, had passed so many weary months. The wire fences and electric lighting arrangements were still standing, and it was not surprising to hear that those prisoners who were taken in October and November, 1899, had become so reckless that they were quite ready to sacrifice their lives for the gratification of injuring their warders.

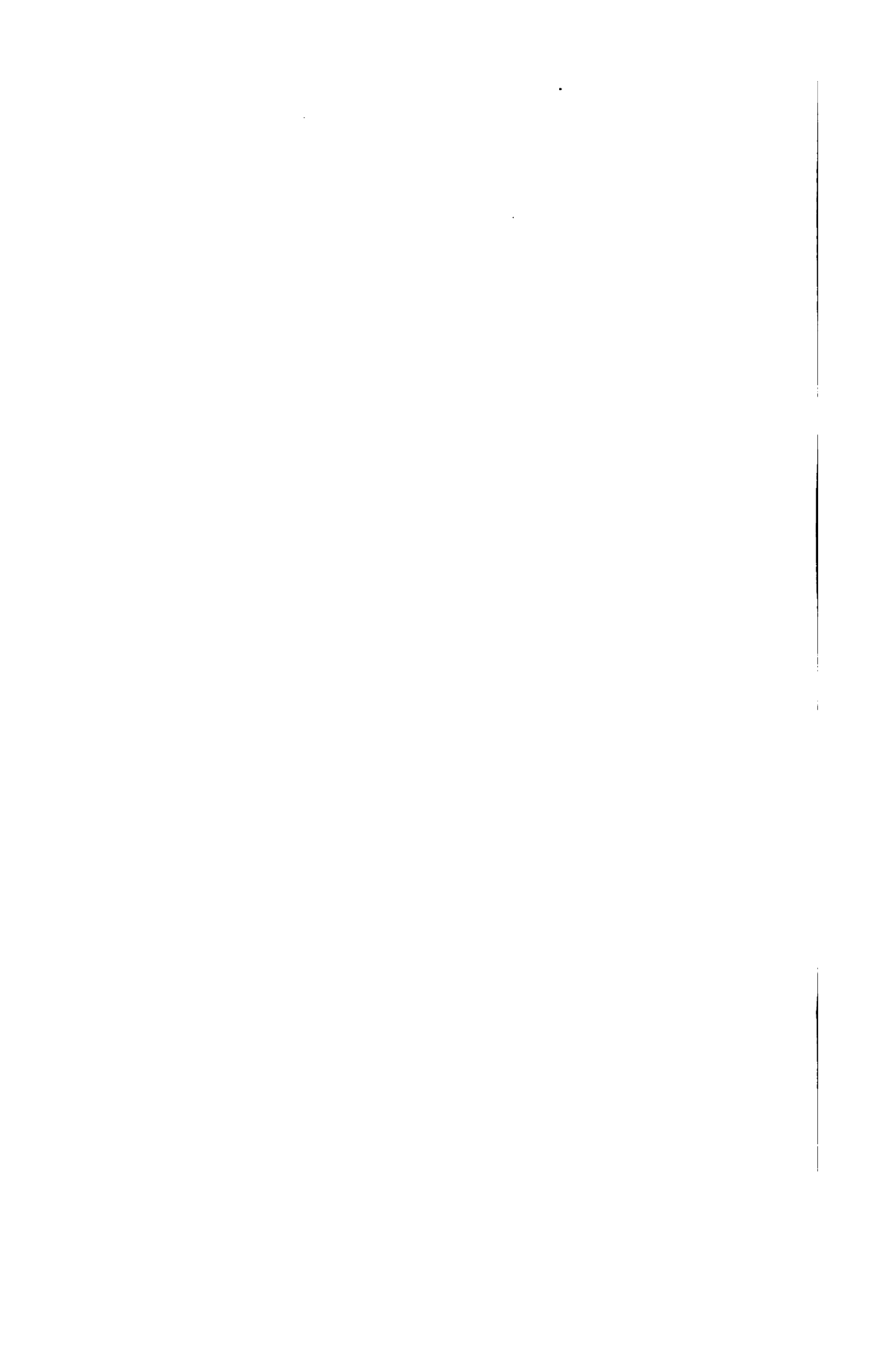
The railway ascends a very steep gradient at Waterval Onder, and a cog-wheel engine in front and another behind, barely succeeded in getting the train up. On the top there is a short tunnel, and although the train

only took two minutes in getting through, yet the sulphur fumes were so stifling and overpowering that all felt they could not have survived another minute.

The night was spent at Waterval Boden, and next morning the journey was continued. It now became a very disagreeable and rather dangerous one. At Belfast there was a blinding sandstorm, which was the very worst that any of the party had yet experienced. The Boers were busily engaged in blowing up the line in different places, and the Guards had just had a bad experience. No accident, however, occurred, and all arrived safely at Pretoria on October 8th, thus ending their third and last trek from that place.



72ND COMPANY.



CHAPTER XXXI.

72ND COMPANY.

WHEN Colonel Colvin, with the Battalion Staff and 79th Company left Pretoria on August 29th, 72nd Company expected to follow in a day or two. However, as soon as remounts were obtained, Captain Chadwick received orders to proceed at once to Commando Nek to join General Clement's column. A provisional battalion was made up of three companies of Yeomanry, and placed under the command of Major Browne (Dorset I.Y.). It consisted of a company of Five Light Horse, a mixed company of Dorsets and Devons, and 72nd Company. There were altogether about two hundred men in the Battalion at first, but the inevitable strain of war soon reduced the fighting strength.

This small mounted force left Pretoria on September 3rd, and proceeded towards Crocodile River, which was crossed on the 4th. General Clements was joined the same day at Commando Nek. With the exception of a few mounted infantry this Battalion was the only Cavalry General Clements possessed, therefore, throughout the whole trek, each company took in rotation the duties of advanced, rear, and flanking guards.

General Clements' work lay in the valley which separated the Witwaterberg and Megaliesberg ranges, a country broken by long low ridges of grass covered hills, which were the outlying spurs of the high mountains

which shut it in on either side. The Commandos under De La Rey occupied the upper end of the valley, and the hills all round were full of snipers, who seldom gave the force a day's rest, and rendered scouting anything but agreeable work. This was the Hekpoort Valley, through which ran the swiftly flowing waters of the Crocodile. It was the South African spring, and everything was green and refreshing, while the valley contained a bountiful supply of fowls, pigs, peaches, and oranges. The burghers of De la Rey's commando were the farmers of this pleasant land, who now lurked by rough kopjes and across treacherous bogs, sniping from their own gardens and land, and taking cover behind waving fields of green crops, or the pink blossoms of the peach trees.

The advance commenced on September 5th. The Yeomanry were ordered to go through a Poort or Pass on the left in order to make that flank good. They got into a very broken wooded country, and came under a sharp fire from some timber covered kopjes. The bullets came so fast that they were only able to get on at all by galloping in small detachments from one position to another. They succeeded, however, in holding the Boers in check until late in the afternoon, when, knowing that the column must by that time have reached its destination, they led the horses across the Witwatersberg range, and rejoined the main body just as night was closing in. Two men were killed and six wounded in this engagement, but 72nd Company had only one horse killed.

Next day, September 6th, the march was continued. 72nd Company formed the advanced guard, and came under a heavy sniping fire the whole time. One of the men was wounded, two were captured by the Boers, and three horses were killed. These casualties occurred in No. 1 troop, which had been sent under Corporal (acting Sergeant) Jude, to secure a large elongated kopje, with



From a sketch by Captain Chadwick.

ACTION NEAR HERKPOORT COVERING LEFT FLANK OF GENERAL CLEMENTS' ADVANCE.
Sept. 6th, 1900.

the information that Boers were believed to be in the neighbourhood. Dividing his troop, Jude detached Lance-Corporal Loveland and four men to hold one end, Jude, with the remainder, meaning to cross the hill and join his detachment. A wire fence and a spruit barred Jude's advance. After cutting the wire they found themselves in a bog, and were immediately fired upon at a range of 100 yards, by anything up to fifty rifles. Two horses went down. The Corporal gave the order to clear, and as they galloped for shelter, he himself reined up, dismounted, and fired several shots, at the same time shouting to the dismounted men. They were too far advanced, however, and one, after emptying his magazine, found himself looking down the barrel of a Mauser. The other, who had fallen badly, was also taken prisoner. The plucky Jude eventually retired unscathed, being covered by the fire of three of his men, who had reached some rocks. Loveland's party came in for a warm time also, for the kop was teeming with De la Rey's men. They held their position against great odds, trying to save a comrade, who was pinned beneath his fallen horse. The enemy came down and occupied a farm house, and also crept under the banks of the spruit. Presently some infantry came out to the rescue, but had to fall back, and the two parties of Yeomanry finished with a gallop through a terrific cross fire. The prisoners afterwards returned to camp, and were loud in their praise of De la Rey, who had considerably allowed them to keep certain valuables. In the evening, as soon as camp was formed, the Boers commenced bombarding it. They threw twenty-five shells into a fairly closely packed bivouac, but as few of these burst, little or no damage was done. Under the cover of night the Worcestershires captured the kopje from which the Boers had directed their artillery fire. During the shelling 72nd Company

amused themselves with pick and shovel digging up unburst shells. Cheers greeted the advent of each missile as they fell with a thud between the horse lines and smothered the bivouacks in clouds of dust. The Sergeant Major fell in the stable guard, and was most annoyed when they ducked their heads at the approach of a shell.

On September 8th, General Clements was joined by General Ridley, whose force consisted of about a thousand mounted men, all irregulars. De la Rey was reported to be about ten miles ahead, and all patrols were sniped at incessantly.

On the 9th, officers commanding units received orders to be in readiness to attack the Boer position the next morning. Accordingly, at 5 a.m. on the 10th the whole force moved off. The Dorsets formed the advance guard, and 72nd Company was on the right flank, while General Ridley was on the left. The whole force was about 2,300 strong, and occupied a frontage of five miles. The Boers were somewhat fewer in numbers, but they held a series of very strong positions on the sloping ridges that stretched across the valley, and rose one behind the other like so many waves. The broken ground on the flanks was also full of snipers, and in addition to their artillery they had a Long Tom, which was placed on one of the hills behind them.

Fighting soon began, and the battle raged fiercely throughout the day. The infantry (Devons and Northumberland Fusiliers) steadily advanced, and slowly but surely drove the Boers before them from ridge to ridge until evening closed in, when, under cover of the darkness, the enemy finally retired. 72nd Company remained on the extreme right of the position throughout the day, and checked all attempts made to get round the flanks. In the evening they were ordered to form part of a line of outposts covering the front. This

proved to be a somewhat difficult operation, as it was exceptionally dark, and the country was quite unknown. However, in the morning it was found that there were no broken links in the chain. The march was now resumed to Zauchfontein. 72nd Company formed the rearguard, and came in for a good deal of long range sniping, which did no harm.

On Wednesday, September 12th, the force marched to Hekpoort, and on the way 72nd Company captured 82 head of cattle. A strong position was then taken up at Hekpoort, and here the force remained until the 19th. 72nd Company sent out patrols every day, and took its turn at outpost duty.

The three Yeomanry Squadrons were sent out on September 14th, to make a reconnaissance to the right front of the position. The advanced party of the Dorsets came under a very heavy fire, resulting in the death of Lieutenant Stanley. 72nd Company held a kopje for some time, but finally instructions were received for the Battalion to return to camp. On the way back 72nd Company acted as rearguard to the other two squadrons; as usual, the Boers harassed the rearguard, and Trooper Jeffries was wounded. One day, shortly after this, two men of Kitchener's Horse, who had strolled across to an English farm, which was close by, were killed by Boers who had hidden close to the house on the chance of some men going there.

On September 24th, the Yeomanry were sent out to meet General Ridley, who had gone to Pretoria to bring out a convoy. They made his right flank good, and for once had no trouble from snipers. Next day, however, when the Yeomanry formed the advance guard to the force, the sniping recommenced. The men had become so hardened and callous by this time that they paid little attention to it, and no damage was done.

Oliphant's Nek was crossed on September 30th, and the following day the force advanced to Strokstrom. 72nd Company were the advance guard, and had a brush with the enemy. None of the Yeomen were hit, but a Boer was killed.

On October 2nd, the three Yeomanry Squadrons and two guns under Major Chance, R.A., were sent out to turn back some Boers who were retreating before a combined movement of General Ridley and General Broadwood. Five Boer wagons were captured and destroyed, but otherwise the little force was not particularly successful. Next day the same party marched to Bethanie (Transvaal), where they destroyed a mill and a quantity of corn and ammunition. Three wagons were also burned.

The force arrived again at Commando Nek on October 5th, and on the 8th went through a Poort in the Witwatersberg range. Heavy firing was heard on the other side, and on emerging from the Pass, it was found that General Barton was engaged with a retreating Boer force. A couple of days after this Captain Chadwick took Lieutenant Digby and nineteen men to a valley some three or four miles off on the right flank of the column in order to arrest a man named Piet Neill. When his house was reached it was found that he had very sensibly left home the previous day. Captain Chadwick then proceeded to burn his farm, as well as a wagon which was found full of ammunition.

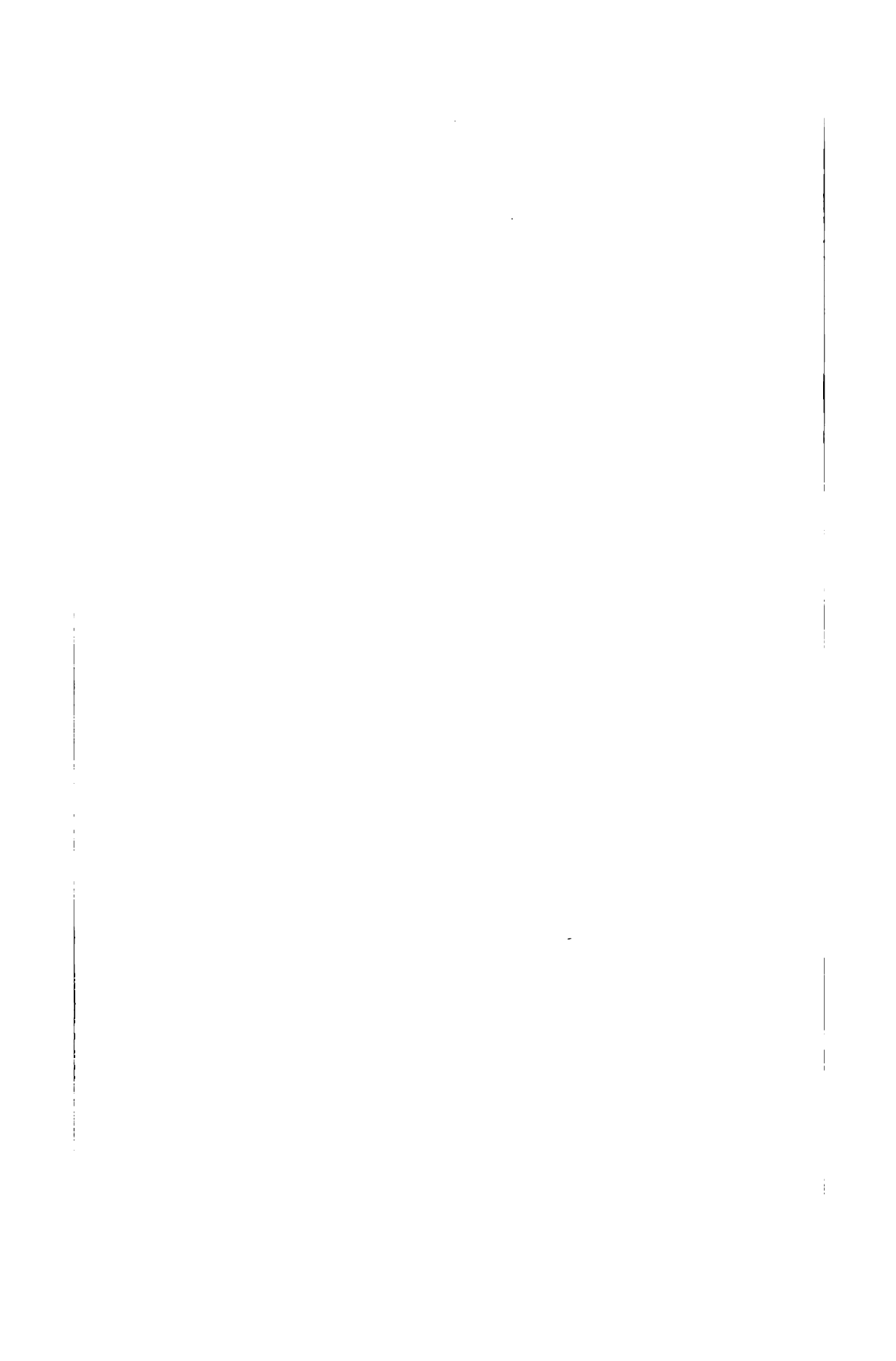
On October 13th and the following day, the mounted troops marched slowly along the foot of the Magaliesberg range, while the infantry proceeded along the sides and summit, clearing the whole country and occupying Damhoek, a Boer stronghold.

Noitgedacht was reached on the 16th, and here an order was telegraphed for 72nd Company (now reduced



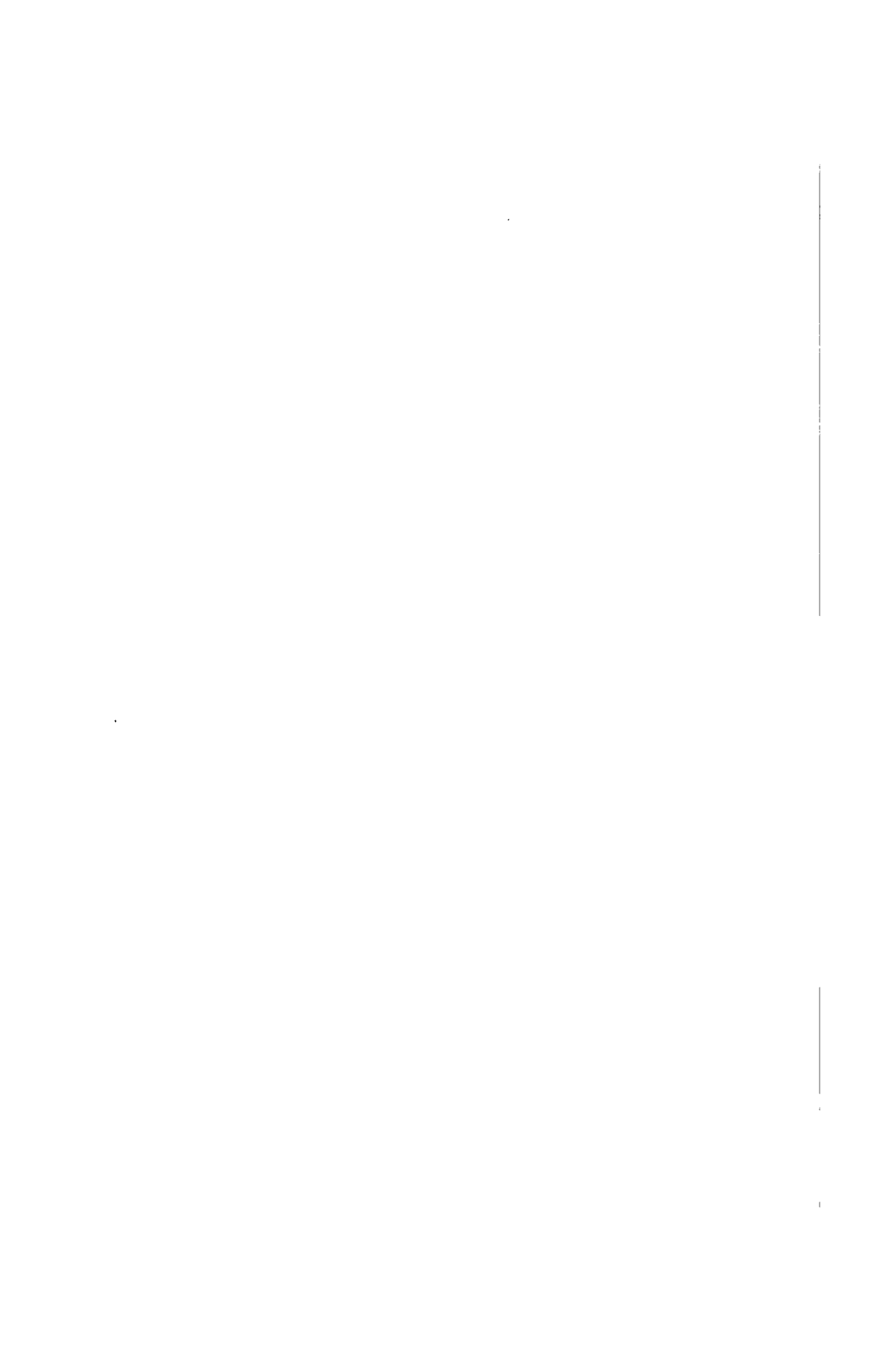
From a sketch by Captain Chadwick.

DAMHOEK.



to under forty in strength) to return to Pretoria. Accordingly, Captain Chadwick set out with the remainder of his squadron, and arrived at Pretoria on the 19th. They proceeded at once to the Yeomanry Detail Camp, where Colonel Colvin and the Battalion Staff were found. An opportunity now occurred for the men of 72nd and 79th Companies to join the Imperial Light Horse, and with this regiment they saw a good deal more active service. On the 29th October Captain Chadwick was appointed Commandant of the I.Y. Camp in succession to Colonel Colvin. With an attenuated force the new Commandant was ordered to hold a considerable frontage on the east side of Pretoria. The renewed activity of the Boers and threatened attacks on the town caused Captain Chadwick a very anxious time during the next two months.

REGIMENTAL STAFF.



CHAPTER XXXII.

REGIMENTAL STAFF.

COLONEL Colvin and the Battalion Staff remained for about three weeks at Pretoria, and here they were rejoined by 79th Company from Machadodorp, and by 72nd Company, who had been trekking with General Clement's Column.

Colonel Colvin was placed in command of the detail camp with Captain Lord Maitland as Adjutant, Lieutenat Wynne as Quarter-Master, and Captain Walcott as Medical Officer. The Veterinary Officer, Lieutenant Barningham, had been detained at Machadodorp, with a remount establishment. He did not return to Pretoria until November, when, unfortunately, he had a bad attack of enteric and died.

There was a good deal of work to be done at Pretoria, and all were kept very busy putting the camp into order, and getting the various details equipped and returned to their respective regiments.

By special orders from Lord Kitchener, the men of 72nd and 79th Companies were allowed to join the Imperial Light Horse, under Colonel Wools Sampson, and to receive colonial rates of pay, while at the same time they retained their privileges as Yeomen. They were also promised employment by the Chamber of Mines at the conclusion of the war, if they should wish it.

Lieutenant Johnson and seventy men of the two Companies took advantage of this special permission, and left Pretoria on October 16th to join Colonel Wools Sampson at a place near Krugersdorp. These men were engaged in a deal of hard fighting, and sustained some heavy casualties. Colonel Wools Sampson spoke of them in the highest terms possible. The only fault that he could find with them was that they were too daring. Praise from him was especially gratifying, as he was an exceptionally brave man himself, and the Imperial Light Horse were undoubtedly the best South African Corps.

On October 25th, Lord Roberts held a review of all the troops in Pretoria, numbering about 6,000. They marched past him in Church Square, and it was a very fine sight. The composite Squadron of Household Cavalry headed the procession, followed by the Guards' Brigade, who swung past in splendid style. The other regiments followed more or less correctly, and then the irregular troops went by with less precision. Some Basuto Chiefs had been brought to Pretoria, in order to see the inspection, and they were much impressed by it.

Before leaving for home, Canon Knox Little preached a very eloquent sermon to the troops at Pretoria. He was Chaplain to the Guards' Brigade, and although over seventy years of age, had accompanied them the whole way to Komati Poort.

Pretoria, although attractive at first, after the trials and hardships of the veldt, did not improve upon acquaintance. It was found to be close, unhealthy, and feverish, being shut in on all sides by hills. There was, however, an excellent supply of water and a splendid swimming bath, which was much appreciated. The best building in the suburbs had been taken for the I.Y. Hospital. It belonged to a Mr. Beckett, an Englishman, and owner of the principal shop in Pretoria. The men

were splendidly treated at this hospital. Some more men belonging to 72nd and 79th Companies obtained employment on the I.M. Railway and with the Police.

As by this time the I.Y. camp was, by one means or another, almost depleted, Colonel Colvin handed over the command to Captain Chadwick, and left Pretoria on October 29th, with the Battalion Staff, for Bloemfontein, in the hope of rejoining the other two Companies, 76th and 78th, who were known to be somewhere in the Orange River Colony. They did not arrive at Bloemfontein until November 1st, as the railway had been blown up.

Colonel Colvin at once reported his arrival to General Kelly-Kenny, and heard that there was no chance of rejoining 76th and 78th Companies, who were trekking in different parts of the Colony. He, therefore, placed his services at the disposal of the General, who asked him to establish a refugee camp at Norvals Pont. Accordingly, on November 5th, he left Bloemfontein with the Battalion Staff, and proceeded to Norvals Pont. They set to work at once, and by the 9th had the camp quite ready for the first batch of refugees. It was an exceedingly dusty spot, and the unfortunate refugees came in for some terrible sandstorms. The ground also afforded very bad holding, and in heavy rain storms the tents were always collapsing.

On November 17th, Colonel Colvin succeeded Major Noris as Commandant at Norvals Pont, and then Lieutenant Wynne took over the command of the Refugee Camp, which was occupied by over a thousand refugees. It was very well organised and managed, but unfortunately an epidemic of black measles broke out, which caused twenty deaths in a little over two months, chiefly among the children. The parents did not appear to be nearly so broken-hearted as might have been expected. A Boer family usually ranges from ten to fifteen.

The men were a very fine lot as a body, and in some athletic sports, in which the garrison competed, they succeeded in pulling off most of the events. Nearly all of them had been on Commando, and would probably take up arms again if opportunity should arise. They appeared to be most confident of ultimate success. The women were not particularly attractive in any way, although they make very good housewives.

The camp was subsequently moved to another site in a charming spot beyond the hills, from which delightful glimpses of the Orange River could be had, and became the prettiest camp in the country.

Colonel Colvin's command at Norvals Pont included a good sized district, which it was his duty to clear of all undesirables, and collect their stock. He had also about fifteen miles of railway to protect. The outposts along this line were constantly attacked by the Boers. The garrison consisted of from 1,000 to 2,000 men, chiefly Guards, a squadron of Nesbitt's Horse, and about 500 details, and two Howitzer guns. This number varied considerably from time to time. Towards the end of November, Major Anderson obtained leave to resign his commission and return home. He left on the 27th, and all regretted his departure.

Early in December, Colonel Colvin went down to Cape Town on sick leave, and during his absence his duties were kindly undertaken by General Inigo Jones. On his return on December 19th, he found that the Boers had invaded the Colony and taken Ventersdorp, and were now marching south. Troops were, therefore, being hurried off to cope with them, but that night a violent storm broke over Norvals Pont, and destroyed the railway. One man and three native children were drowned, and the hospital was wrecked. All trains were consequently blocked, but the line was repaired as

quickly as possible, and when once they were able to get through, the stream of troops was continuous for several days. The pontoon bridge had also been carried away by the storm. It was repaired at once, but soon afterwards was carried away again, and a second time replaced.

On January 18th, in compliance with General Macdonald's orders, Colonel Colvin handed over the command of Norvals Pont to the officer commanding the Guards' detachment, and the same day entrained for Cape Town. Orders had been received from the Inspector-General, Imperial Yeomanry, that the 20th Battalion, as well as certain others, was to be broken up, and the Battalion Staff sent home to England on duty. It was entirely contrary to Colonel Colvin's wish to leave the country while any part of the Battalion remained behind, and he accordingly wrote to the authorities regarding the matter, urging that the Battalion might, if possible, be reconstructed and placed under his command until the conclusion of the war. Captain Lord Maitland also went to Pretoria to try and find out the intentions of the I.Y. authorities, but could learn nothing specific.

Colonel Colvin arrived at Cape Town on January 22nd, and having found that the Battalion could not be reconstructed, and that there was no further demand for his services, took passage on the s.s. "Idaho," where he was joined on board by Lieutenant Wynne and Captain Lord Maitland on the 25th.

Captain Walcott remained in South Africa, and became the Medical Officer of the 9th Battalion I.Y., with the rank of Major.

On January 25th, they said their last farewell to South Africa, as the steamer sailed out of the Bay. On board the "Idaho," Colonel Colvin was in command of about eight hundred details, chiefly time expired men and

invalids. Unfortunately, two of the latter died of enteric before reaching St. Vincent. Captain Lord Maitland was appointed Adjutant, and Lieutenant Wynne Quarter-Master to the ship. The weather was beautifully fine during the voyage, and the ship's Captain and Officer Commanding troops did everything in their power to make the time pass pleasantly.

Before leaving South Africa the sad news was received of the death of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

72ND & 79TH COMPANIES

WITH THE

IMPERIAL LIGHT HORSE.



TROOPER OF THE IMPERIAL LIGHT HORSE TAKING A LAST LOOK
AT A COMRADE'S GRAVE.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

72ND AND 79TH COMPANIES WITH THE IMPERIAL
LIGHT HORSE.

WE have already seen that 72 and 79 Companies returned from different parts of the Transvaal to Pretoria about the middle of October. Here it became known that a number of the officers were leaving, and the men were offered the chance of joining either the Cape Mounted Police or some other Yeomanry. They did not care about this, however, and as they had been constantly working with the Imperial Light Horse, they asked if they might be allowed to join that body. Special permission was obtained from Lord Kitchener, and the Rough Riders felt very pleased at being allowed to join so distinguished a corps.

The Imperial Light Horse were a fine body of men, raised principally from the British refugees from the Rand. The ranks of this regiment were full of wealthy men, and men of education, who had been driven from their peaceful vocations in Johannesburg. Colonel Chisholm, a Lancer, had fallen with two mortal wounds at the head of his Regiment at Elandslaagte, where also many of his men fell. From that fight at the beginning of the war until this date the Imperial Light Horse had been engaged in the most serious fighting—Ladysmith, Kimberley, Mafeking, Wepner, to mention only a few actions—and had sus-

tained terrible losses. At Ladysmith (Wagon Hill) alone, ten of their officers and more than half the men were down but their extraordinary courage and grim determination, according to Sir George White, "saved Ladysmith on that occasion." On October 16th seventy men of the two Companies (72 and 79) left Pretoria, under the command of Lieutenant Johnson (79th Company) in order to join the Imperial Light Horse under Colonel Wools Sampson, at a place near Krugersdorp.

News had been received that severe fighting was going on down the Klerksdorp—Johannesburg line, and the nearer the Rough Riders approached, the more frequent became the reports of big engagements. The situation was briefly as follows:—De Wet, after having been chased at headlong speed from the Vaal River to the Magaliesberg Mountains, retreated to the north of the Orange River Colony, where he lay for nearly two months refitting and gathering fresh forces. He then suddenly made a dash northwards towards Fredericksstad with two thousand men in the hope of cutting off the British. General Barton was at the time patrolling the Krugersdorp—Johannesburg line, with a strong force, consisting of Scots and Welsh Fusiliers, five hundred mounted men (Imperial Light Horse and Fife Light Horse), the 78th Battery R.F.A., three pom-poms, and a 4·7 naval gun. As this force moved along the line they came into contact with De Wet's force, and frequent sharp engagements took place with the commandos of Douthwaite, Liebenberg, Van de Merwe, and others. Casualties constantly occurred on both sides during this march.

When the men of 72 and 79 Companies reached Welverdiend Station, they were informed that the Imperial Light Horse under General Barton were very heavily engaged. Accordingly the Rough Riders were hurried off with all possible speed to the assistance of

their new comrades. Darkness had already fallen, when the order was received, and everything had to be de-trained. The horses were fresh ones, the saddles were new and stripped, and the force had to be ready to march at 4 a.m. The men had just had an uncomfortable and tiring railway journey, but nevertheless they worked splendidly all through the night unloading horses, fixing up saddlery and kit, and at the appointed hour everything was ready, and the men rode off in high spirits.

When Lieutenant Johnson, with his men, arrived at the scene of action, De Wet was already pressing his attack upon General Barton, who was entrenched on hills to the S.E., and to the north of Friedrichsstad Station. As the Yeomen rode up, shells were bursting on an adjacent kopje, called Gun Hill, where the Boers were vainly trying to put out of action the 4.7 naval gun which was posted there. The Rough Riders halted pending definite orders, and tried to snatch some food and a short rest, but there was to be no rest for them yet, as the Imperial Light Horse were being driven in by the Boers, and instructions came for Lieutenant Johnson and the Yeomanry to move off immediately, and cut off a strong party of the enemy who were endeavouring to occupy a ridge overlooking the camp. Without any delay the Rough Riders galloped off at a rapid pace, and the Boers were forced to retreat. The ridge was saved, and the Yeomen were afterwards complimented upon the success of their work.

Meanwhile, however, General Barton's main force was gradually being driven back, and towards evening they were obliged to retire under cover of the guns to the wooded country below Gun Hill. By the time they arrived there night had fallen, and then the British found that they were surrounded. Affairs had taken an unexpected turn, and the position was not by any means a

pleasant one. There was only sufficient food for a very short time, and the supply of ammunition was small. The surrounding cordon was drawn gradually tighter, and the investment continued for six days. During all these days the troops were shelled continually, and subjected to an incessant rifle fire. Runners were sent out to endeavour to break through, but these were either killed or captured. The Boers held strong positions on the E., S., and N.W., and were now feeling round for a point where an assault might be made.

Sir A. Conan Doyle, in his book, "The Great Boer War," describes the position on October 25th, the sixth day of the siege, as follows:—

"The Scots Fusiliers held a ridge to the south. General Barton, with the rest of his forces, occupied a hill some distance off. Between the two was a valley, down which ran the railway line, and also the spruit upon which the British depended for their water supply. On each side of the line were ditches, and at dawn on this day it was found that the enemy had occupied them during the night, and that it was impossible to water the animals."

The British found it absolutely necessary at all costs to turn the burghers out. It was, of course, work for infantry, and so the Rough Riders, with their comrades, the Imperial Light Horse, were not called upon. About noon several companies of the Scots and Welsh Fusiliers advanced from various points in extended order upon the ditches. A terrific fusillade greeted them as they pressed forward, and Captain Baillie, three times hit, was one of the first killed. Six of his men were also struck down and found dead on the field. A mile of flat open veldt had to be crossed by the Fusiliers without any cover whatever, but the rush of the men was irresistible, and they rapidly closed in upon the ditches. The

Fusiliers then surged into the trenches, driving the enemy out.

Conan Doyle continues:—"The scene that followed has not often been paralleled. About one hundred and fifty burghers rushed out of the trenches, streaming across the veldt upon foot to the spot where the horses had been secreted. Rifles, pom-poms, and shrapnel played upon them during this terrible race. . . . One of the survivors has described how awful was that wild blind flight through a dust cloud thrown up by the shells. For a mile the veldt was dotted with those who had fallen."

Intermingled with the bodies were blankets, boots, rifles, coats, and various other articles of kit which had been carried by the Boers, and thrown away during their wild retreat. Thirty-six Boers were found dead on the veldt, thirty more were wounded, and another thirty were taken prisoners.

If the Imperial Light Horse had charged the retreating enemy at once probably not a single fugitive would have escaped. For various reasons they were prevented from doing this. One part of the Imperial Light Horse, however, had a most exciting time. They had just passed a party of Boers who had surrendered, and were hurrying on after their comrades. "On this," says Conan Doyle, "the prisoners seized their rifles again and fired upon their captors. A fierce fight ensued, with only a few feet between the rifles. Three Boers were shot dead, five wounded, and eight taken. Of these eight, three were shot dead next day, by order of court-martial, for having resumed their weapons again after surrender."

Considerable reinforcements now reached General Barton, including the Dublins, Essex, Strathcona's Horse, and the Elswick Battery, together with some very much-needed ammunition. An attack was made upon De Wet's

force, which was driven back and defeated, and he was finally compelled to hasten off and seek refuge in his favourite haunts. During the engagements General Barton's force lost about one hundred men. The Rough Riders, who were now equally distributed among the squadrons of Imperial Light Horse, were very fortunate in having no one hit, although they were under fire all the time.

The next few weeks were occupied in driving the Boers back towards the Vaal River. De Wet escaped by Shoeman's Drift, but was then further harassed by General Knox, who captured two guns. Backwards and forwards the columns trekked from Welverdiend to Fredricksstad, Potchefstroom, and Klerksdorp. At the latter place they received a most enthusiastic and cordial reception from the British residents, women and children coming out to meet them with flags and banners, etc.

Christmas Day was spent at Potchefstroom, where it was hoped that a few days rest might be obtained. At 11 o'clock that night, however, the Imperial Light Horse received orders to set off at once under General Babington for Ventersdorp, where the Boers had assembled for Christmas. The force arrived at this place on the morning of Boxing Day, and General Babington rapidly dispersed the enemy in all directions. He then made Ventersdorp his headquarters, and from it as centre made a series of forced marches, chiefly at night, during which some thousands of cattle were captured. There were many small encounters with the enemy, and in one of these, at Rooi Kraal on December 31st, Corporal Noble was wounded. He recovered sufficiently to be able to resume his duties soon afterwards.

These little fights were as nothing, however, compared to the big action at Naauwpoort, or Zandfontein, near the Magaliesberg, which occurred on January 5th,

during one of these marches, and in which the Imperial Light Horse suffered very severely at the hands of De la Rey.

The Boer Commandos, which had been driven into the mountains by Generals French and Clements during the latter part of December, were on the look out to strike a blow at any British force which might expose itself. The columns of Colonels Kekewich and Gordon were acting in conjunction with General Babington, and on the morning of January 5th, 1901, there was a very heavy mist, during which General Babington and Colonel Gordon met, and actually turned their rifles on each other. Fortunately, however, no casualties occurred. But a more deadly encounter awaited them a little later on the same day. The following account of it is quoted from Conan Doyle's "Great Boer War":—

"A force of Boers was observed, as the mist cleared, making for a ridge which would command the road along which the convoy and guns were moving. Two squadrons (B and C) of the Light Horse, under Colonel Wools Sampson, were instantly detached to seize the point. They do not appear to have realised that they were in the immediate neighbourhood of the enemy, and they imagined that the ground over which they were passing had been already reconnoitred by a troop of the 14th Hussars. It is true that four scouts were thrown forward, but as both squadrons were cantering, there was no time for these to get ahead. Presently C Squadron, which was behind, was ordered to close up on the left of B Squadron, and the 150 horsemen in one long line swept over a low grassy ridge. Some hundreds of De la Rey's men were lying in the long grass upon the further side, and their first volley, fired at a fifty-yard range, emptied a score of saddles. It would have been wiser, if less gallant, to retire at once in the presence of a numerous

and invisible enemy, but the survivors were ordered to dismount and return the fire. This was done, but the hail of bullets was terrific, and the casualties were numerous. Captain Norman, of "C" Squadron, then retired his men, who withdrew in good order. "B" Squadron having lost Yockney, its brave leader, heard no order, so they held their ground until few of them had escaped the driving sleet of lead. Many men were struck three and four times. There was no surrender, and the extermination of "B" Company added another laurel, even at that moment of defeat, to the regiment whose reputation was so grimly upheld. The Boer victors walked in among the litter of stricken men and horses. 'Practically all of them were dressed in khaki, and had the water bottles and haversacks of our soldiers. One of them snatched a bayonet from a dead man, and was about to dispatch one of our wounded, when he was stopped in the nick of time by a man in a black suit, who, I afterwards heard, was De la Rey himself. . . . The feature of the action was the incomparable heroism of our dear old Colonel Wools Sampson.' So wrote a survivor of "B" Company, himself shot through the body. It was four hours before a fresh British advance re-occupied the ridge, and by that time the Boers had disappeared. Some seventy killed and wounded, many of them terribly mutilated, were found on the scene of the disaster."

After the retirement the remnants of the Imperial Light Horse formed up, and advanced again, this time in extended order, and the enemy were finally driven off.

That the losses were very heavy in these two squadrons, B and C, is apparent from the comparatively large number of casualties among the Rough Riders, some seventy of whom were divided between the six squadrons of the Imperial Light Horse. They were chiefly attached to "B" Squadron.

KILLED IN ACTION.

Trooper T. Gollan.
" A. J. Bywater.
" W. W. Chinnock.
" A. Wright.
" J. Blake.
" P. Clarke.
" G. A. Raynor.

DIED OF WOUNDS.

Trooper C. Rex.

SEVERELY WOUNDED.

Trooper N. J. Wighton.
Bugler Wells.

After this reverse General Babington continued to trek about the mountainous districts of the Magaliesberg, with Klerksdorp as his base. Sir A. Conan Doyle continues:—

"On March 21st he had reached Haartebeestefontein, the scene, not long before, of a successful action by Lord Methuen. Here he was joined by Shekleton's Mounted Infantry, and his whole force consisted of these, with the 1st Imperial Light Horse, the 6th Imperial Bushmen, the New Zealanders, a squadron of the 14th Hussars, a wing each of the Somerset Light Infantry and of the Welsh Fusiliers, with Carter's guns and four pom-poms. With this mobile and formidable little force, Babington pushed on in search of Smuts and De la Rey, who were known to be in the immediate neighbourhood. As a matter of fact the Boers were not only there, but were nearer, and in greater force than had been anticipated. On the 22nd three squadrons

of the Imperial Light Horse, under Major Biggs, rode into 1,500 of them, and it was only by virtue of their steadiness and gallantry, that they succeeded in withdrawing themselves and their pom-pom without a disaster. With Boers in their front and Boers on either flank they fought an admirable rearguard action. So hot was the fire that "A" Squadron alone had twenty-two casualties. They faced it out, however, until their gun had reached a place of safety, when they made an orderly retirement towards Babington's camp, having inflicted as heavy a loss as they had sustained."

The Rough Riders had two casualties in this action, Trooper D. Paterson being killed, and Lance-Corporal and Squadron-Sergeant-Major W. F. Loveland being severely wounded.

During the fight Lance-Corporal Loveland performed a very gallant action. Although wounded in five places he continued to advance and wave his comrades on until the Boers finally galloped over him. For this he was recommended, and was made King's Sergeant by Lord Kitchener. It is pleasing to be able to record that, although he had been so very severely wounded, he speedily recovered, and when a few weeks afterwards Quarter-Master-Sergeant Hockin had the pleasure of presenting him with Lord Kitchener's letter, he was much surprised to find him sitting up in bed, as cheerful as ever, and well on the road to complete recovery.

After the action on March 22nd, General Babington pushed on, and next day passed through Kaffir Kraal, driving the enemy before him. On the 24th his force encountered the Boers once more, and this time the Rough Riders attached to the Imperial Light Horse were privileged to take part in one of the most important and successful incidents of the war. That morning the New Zealanders and Bushmen formed the advance guard.

Very soon a large Boer commando, with many guns and wagons, was seen advancing in the open straight towards General Babington's force. This was almost the only time in the long war in which a considerable force of each side found themselves in the open face to face. All the mounted troops were immediately ordered to advance, and in one magnificent charge they galloped straight for the enemy and right into the midst of the moving mass of horsemen and guns. All instantly became confusion and the Boers did not even attempt to stand, but turned and fled incontinently. Only a few of the better mounted escaped the general annihilation. Some of the Boer riflemen who had been far out on the flanks rode round to the rear of the British convoy and sniped at it, but these, too, were quickly driven off. In this action two field guns, one pom-pom, six maxims, fifty-six wagons, and 140 prisoners were captured, and the Boer casualties, killed and wounded, amounted to fifty.

This was the last fight of any importance that the men of the 72nd and 79th Companies took part in, while they were with the Imperial Light Horse. They continued to trek with General Babington until the beginning of April, when they finally took leave of their comrades at Vendersdorp. A few of the men still stayed on with the Imperial Light Horse, and afterwards gained promotion and distinction. Amongst these was Corporal Osmond. The rest of 72nd and 79th Companies accompanied by Lieutenant Johnson, marched from Vendersdorp to Potchefstroom, where they were to entrain for home. Even on this last little trek they had a final skirmish with the enemy, but fortunately came out scatheless. Lieutenant Johnson had served with the Rough Riders throughout all these months, and by his courage and ability had much endeared himself to the men. In the action at Fredericksstad he had so distin-

guished himself that Colonel Wools Sampson broke through the rule of the regiment, and allowed him to stay on as an officer of the Imperial Light Horse.

APPENDIX.

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APPENDIX I.

THE good service rendered by the 20th Battalion in South Africa, is attested by the following list of honours and distinctions conferred on some of its members.

Lord Roberts' Despatch of September 4th, 1901, which is a continuation of that of April 2nd, and is to be considered as bearing date November 29th, 1900, includes among others, "who have rendered special and meritorious service":—

20TH BATTALION I.Y.

Lieutenant Colonel R. B. Colvin.
 Major H. A. Anderson.
 Captain E. Chadwick (Major, Reserve of Officers).
 Captain C. H. Colvin.
 Captain B. H. Piercy.
 Captain H. W. M. Bonham (Lieutenant-Colonel Reserve of Officers).
 Captain F. C. Viscount Maitland.
 Captain F. Walcot (Medical Officer).
 Lieutenant J. H. Patterson.
 Lieutenant E. A. Digby.
 Lieutenant E. D. Johnston.
 Lieutenant R. Wynne.
 Sergeant Major W. Weightman.
 Squadron Sergeant Major R. V. Davidson.
 Sergeant C. Wickham.

Corporal W. F. Loveland.
 Shoeing-Smith J. Shreeve.
 Trooper H. Barlow.

The following are also mentioned in Lord Kitchener's Despatch, dated May 8th, 1901:—

20TH BATTALION I.Y.

Lieutenant J. H. Patterson, on February 16th, sixteen miles west of Ladybrand, with two men, encountered fifteen Boers, killed one, wounded one, and captured two. On March 14th, near Coomissie Drift, engaged Boers single-handed, and wounded and captured two.

Corporal Loveland (promoted Sergeant), although wounded in five places, continued to fire until Boers galloped over him.

Corporal T. A. Elliment (promoted Sergeant) near Ladybrand, April 5th, with five men, drove off a party of Boers who attacked convoy with great determination, thereby saving six wagons.

The "London Gazette," dated September —, also mentions the following special Honours and Distinctions conferred.

20TH BATTALION I.Y.

To be a Companion of the Order of the Bath:
 Lieutenant-Colonel R. B. Colvin.

To be Companions of the Distinguished Service Order:—

Captain C. H. Colvin.
 Captain J. H. Patterson.
 Lieutenant R. Wynne.

To have the Medal for Distinguished Service in the Field:—

Squadron-Sergeant-Major R. V. Davidson.
 Shoeing-Smith J. Shreeve.

APPENDIX II.

AN imposing ceremony took place on July 26th at the Horse Guards' Parade Ground, when the King, who was accompanied by the Queen, distributed the war medals to the Yeomanry. Here those who were left of the 20th Battalion met together once again, and as they filed past, each man received from the King's hands the medal he had won for service in the field.

A farewell dinner, at which Colonel Colvin presided, was held the same evening at the Holborn Restaurant. It was a most successful gathering, and all those who were fortunate enough to be present will ever remember the memorable wind-up, as it were, of an organisation which had served its country so nobly and so well. There were present, among others: Lieutenant-General T. Kelly-Kenny, Lieutenant-General Sir Ian Hamilton, Colonel A. G. Lucas, and Colonel H. A. Barclay.

Lieutenant-General Sir Ian Hamilton (under whom 72nd and 79th Companies served in South Africa) spoke of the Rough Riders in a most complimentary manner, and said that his experience of them was that he wished he could have had them with him a little longer. He hoped that they would feel what strength and value they were to the country. For the next fifteen years, at least, there would now be men who knew their business, and would be ready to turn out and face the enemy at any moment.

Later on in the year the King held an Investiture at St. James' Palace (October 29th), when the Order of Companion of the Bath was conferred upon Colonel Colvin. Captain C. H. Colvin, Captain Patterson, and Lieutenant Wynne were also decorated with the Distinguished Service Order, and Squadron Sergeant Major Davidson and Shoeing-Smith J. Shreeve received the Medal for Distinguished Service in the Field.

APPENDIX III.

ONE more event remains to be recorded, which suitably brings the history of the 20th Battalion to a close. We refer to the unveiling of the Monument erected in Waltham Abbey, on the initiative of Colonel Colvin, by the Rough Riders, to the memory of their comrades who had fallen in South Africa. This monument is in the form of a Mural tablet of pure white marble mounted upon alabaster, and fixed at the West end of the Abbey, directly over the Font. Leaning on the tablet, one on either side, are figures of Grief and Fame. The whole is surmounted by a Crown and Laurel Wreath, with the inscription, "Pro Patria," underneath the Crown.

On this tablet are inscribed the names of those brave Yeomen who gave their lives for their country. They will thus ever be fittingly remembered by having their names engraved on the walls of one of England's oldest and most cherished Abbey Churches. The following is the list of the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers, and men who fell:—

Captain C. G. T. Bromfield.
Captain E. D. P. Wickham.
Lieutenant D. C. Barningham.
Sergeant A. E. Dearle.
Sergeant H. Glazier.
Corporal W. J. Cugley.
Corporal A. Escott.

Corporal P. G. Vickery.
 Lance-Corporal J. S. Blake.
 Lance-Corporal F. G. Mountain.
 Lance-Corporal J. H. Maclaren.
 Trooper A. J. Bywater.
 " P. Clark.
 " W. W. Chinnock.
 " W. H. Edwards.
 " F. J. Galt.
 " H. P. Goddard.
 " F. W. Moger.
 " H. H. Moreton.
 " D. Paterson.
 " C. B. Stone.
 " F. W. Urmston.
 " J. Wilmott.
 " T. Gollan.
 " G. A. Raynor.
 " C. H. Rex.
 " C. E. H. Ryder.
 " W. Stephenson.
 " F. W. Ubsdell.
 " A. E. Wright.

NOTE. Captains Bromfield and Wickham obtained commissions in the 22nd Battalion I.Y., and were promoted Captains. They were killed while serving with that Battalion.

General Sir Ian Hamilton kindly promised to perform the unveiling ceremony, and on December 4th a military display, such as is seldom seen in those parts, took place at Waltham Abbey.

A large number of Rough Riders, with their Officers, accompanied by the Waltham Abbey troop of the Essex I.Y. and a Company of the 1st V.B. Bedfordshire Regiment, paraded at Waltham Cross railway station,

and, headed by Yeomanry and Volunteer bands, marched under the command of Colonel Colvin, C.B., to the Abbey, where seats had been reserved for them. Crowds lined their route, and the church was full to overflowing.

The service was a very solemn and impressive one, and was conducted by the Vicar, the Rev. F. B. Johnstone, M.A. After the Benediction, General Sir Ian Hamilton, Colonel Colvin, Colonel Stock, and Major Nathan, passed with the Vicar down the Nave to the Font, over which the Memorial had been fixed. Before unveiling it, General Sir Ian Hamilton delivered an admirable speech, which was listened to with rapt attention by the vast congregation. Speaking slowly and impressively, he said:—

“ We have assembled at this consecrated spot, where the mortal remains of the great King Harold are lying, to show our affectionate remembrance of those brave Rough Riders, who now will ride no more. When our dear country was in danger, the Rough Riders came forward, not being forced to do so by conscription, but rather as free Englishmen, willing to risk their lives in defence of their native land. The risk was real, and some have paid for it with their blood.

Our great poet Browning makes a lover say:—

“ The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! What atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey Stones.”

If a man is sent into this world to think only of his own miserable person, then, indeed, we may well ask, “ What atones?” What, under such conditions, atones for the loss of that life to which all created beings so instinctively cling? Far nobler feelings, however, animated the men whose death we have met here to commemorate. So long as we produce such men the Empire will flourish. When we cease to do so, the Empire will shrink and decay.

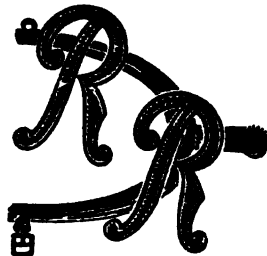
If foreign nations could only be made to realise that there are hundreds of thousands of young Englishmen who are prepared, in case of need, freely to "spend their sweet lives to do their country service," then, as the poet Blake continues.—

"Then shall English verdure shoot,
Her fields shall smile,
Her ships shall sail across the foamy sea,
And rattling guns and black and dreary war
Shall be no more."

"Life's highest point is reached in the display of heroism, and no matter what a man's failings and shortcomings may be, he is a hero if he is willing to lay down his life for his native land.

May this memorial often serve to "point a moral and adorn a tale." May many a boy and girl, whilst gazing at it, be filled at the same time with a burning patriotism and unquenchable desire to emulate their deeds, for those who are here enshrined, have died for love of England, love of duty, love of heroic daring. They have, indeed, nobly proved by their glorious end the truth of those great words:—

"Love is all and Death is naught."



ROLL.



ROUGH RIDERS.

(XXTH BATTALION IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.)

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN.

14533 Trooper Allen, F.
 14536 " Ancrum, F.
 14550 " Aitkin, W.
 14580 " Alexander, J.
 14593 " Absolom, S. G.
 14598 " Aubin, E.
 14612 Staff-Sergeant-Major Agar, F. H.
 15617 Serjeant Allan, A. S.
 15623 Trooper Adlam, S. G.
 15636 Lance-Corporal Algar, R. J.
 15637 Trooper Armstrong, A. M.
 15703 " Arlington, E. W.
 15756 Staff-Sergeant-Major Adams, H. R.
 15998 Corporal Andrews, J. G.
 16015 Trooper Ansell, C. N. (wounded).
 16044 " Abnett, E. J.
 16048 " Alchin, A. H.
 16076 " Atcherley, R. O. B.
 16126 " Ackerley, B.
 14494 " Bentote, E. G.
 14495 Lance-Serjeant Barnes, T.
 14497 Trooper Botton, A. J.
 14532 Serjeant Bradbury, J.
 14534 Trooper Brett, W.
 14541 " Betzemann, A.
 14552 " Boese, C. E. (wounded).
 14554 " Bedford, F. J.
 14555 " Belton, T.
 14557 " Browne, R. J. D.
 14569 Lance-Corporal Bonsor, J.
 14584 " " Blake, J. S. (killed in action).
 14587 " " Bailey, C. F.

16107 Corporal Bristol, S. S.
 16111 Trooper Baker, F.
 16112 " Barker, A. R.
 16119 " Burton, H. P.
 16122 " Bryant, E.
 16124 " Bunn, L.
 16134 Farrier-Serjeant Bennett, W.
 14491 Trooper Clark, J. E.
 14492 " Cutlack, H.
 14493 Lance-Corporal Cutlack, A. F.
 14524 Corporal Collyer, C. R.
 14545 Trooper Collett, M. A.
 14546 " Clark, P. (killed in action).
 14548 " Chatterton, T. F.
 14562 " Chapman, F. T.
 14564 " Collins, J.
 14581 Serjeant Carmen, J. W.
 14608 Trooper Cooke, J. M.
 14636 Lance-Corporal Carter, E. L.
 14639 Trooper Cook, J. A.
 14665 " Collard, S.
 15613 Corporal Clay, C. E.
 15616 Trooper Cubitt, H. C.
 15621 " Clarke, E. W.
 15627 " Churchyard, F. G.
 15630 " Connall, A. R.
 15648 " Clements, W.
 15659 " Clarke, E. C.
 15672 " Curtis, F.
 15688 " Corfield, A.
 15693 " Crane, W.
 15691 " Cloutte, A. H.
 15688 " Cloke, S. (wounded).
 15702 Corporal Curtis, A.
 15763 Trooper Cranton, F.
 15766 Corporal Cugley, F. W.
 15776 Serjeant Cronin, W.
 15784 Corporal Cugley, W. J. (died disease).
 15785 Trooper Cook, F. W.
 16042 " Callaghan, T.
 16046 " Cope, T. H.
 16073 " Chester, C. J.
 16080 " Clayson, J.

16085 Serjeant Corfe, R. C. H.
 16097 " Close, E.
 16101 " Castle, J. L.
 16113 " Chinnock, W. W. (killed in action).
 16115 Farrier-Serjeant Chatteris, F.
 16116 Farrier-Serjeant Cockedge, E. P.
 16132 Trooper Craven, F.
 16133 " Chapman, R.
 14498 " Donovan, T.
 14508 Squadron-Serjeant-Major Dean, G. E.
 14574 Serjeant Dearle, A. E. (died of wounds).
 14614 Trooper Davis, G. W.
 14666 " Dudney, R. G.
 15629 " Davies, H.
 15644 " Day, C. E.
 15665 " Dawson, S.
 15668 Lance-Corporal Day, F. G.
 15677 Trooper Davis, W. A.
 15718 " Deeks, F. A.
 15732 " Dibbin, J. W.
 15742 Corporal Dobson, G.
 15750 Trooper Dunbar, L.
 15753 Farrier-Serjeant Dyball, H. E.
 16006 Trooper Duncan, R. (wounded).
 16007 " Davey, C. W.
 16014 " Daniel, A. E.
 16039 Lance-Corporal Davenport, J. H.
 16051 Trooper Durrant, C.
 16090 Squadron-Serjeant-Major Davidson, R. V.
 16106 Trooper Davis, D. O.
 16128 " Deane, T. P.
 14585 " Egerton, B. G.
 14601 " Ellis, F. C.
 14606 " Ellement, J. A.
 14623 " Edwards, T. G.
 14667 " Emerton, A. J.
 15611 " Ede, W.
 15667 " Evans, B. D.
 15674 " Evans, E. F.
 15706 " Edwards, H. J.
 15707 " Ebsworth, R.
 15738 " Edwards, W. H. (died disease).

15788 Corporal Emery, F. G.
 16005 " Evans, A. H.
 16037 " Eagles, G. W. (died of wounds).
 16050 " Escott, A.
 16095 Bugler Elston, F. T.
 14496 Trooper Franks, T.
 14525 Lance-Corporal Fisher, R. W.
 14542 Corporal Frewin, H. A.
 14558 " Fisher, M. L.
 15719 " Faulkner, H.
 16054 Trooper Farr, A. B.
 16059 " Furby, F. H.
 16066 " Forman, P. B.
 16110 " Fitzgerald, A. S.
 16114 Farrier-Serjeant Furnish, A.
 16125 Farrier-Serjeant Freeman, T. H.
 16139 Serjeant Fisher, J.
 14499 Trooper Gascoyne, F.
 14500 " Goodchild, L.
 14567 " Galt, F. J. (died disease).
 14568 Lance-Corporal Grantham, H. S.
 14582 Serjeant Gascoyne, G.
 14590 Trooper Goodyear, F. J.
 14600 " Gabb, J. R.
 14620 " Goddard, R. J.
 14664 " Glover, W. J.
 14669 " Guise, A. R.
 15626 " Grant, H.
 15635 " Godwin, A. J.
 15651 Serjeant Glazier, H. (died disease).
 15658 " Guillet, F. G.
 15711 Trooper Gollan, T. (killed in action).
 15729 " Gatwood, P. J.
 15734 Lance-Corporal Gray, V. G.
 15770 Trooper Gale, E. E.
 15786 " Goertz, C.
 16004 " Grant, J. C.
 16012 " Goddard, H. P. (died disease).
 16019 " Godwin, W. D.
 16025 " Green, R. W. (wounded).
 16052 " Gilbert, G.
 16060 " Green, H.
 16083 Farrier-Serjeant Garden, P. E.

- 16087 Trooper Gresson, G.
 14490 Serjeant Hobson, H. T.
 14502 Trooper Holden, A. M.
 14504 „ Heaver, J.
 14505 Squadron Qr.-Master-Serjeant Hewitt, A. E.
 14538 Trooper Holliday, F. S.
 14539 R. Quarter-Master-Serjeant Hopper, W. H.
 14544 Trooper Harris, H. G.
 14571 „ Hawking, E. H.
 14633 Corporal Hazell, H.
 14635 Trooper Hawkins, G. J.
 14663 „ Hastie, W. O.
 15603 Serjeant Hannan, G. H. C.
 15604 Trooper Holmes, S.
 15612 Sergeant Hopper, A.
 15614 Trooper Hobbs, W.
 15622 „ Hayes, W. H.
 15625 „ Hubbard, M. C.
 15628 „ Horsington, W.
 15686 „ Hayman, R. W.
 15687 „ Hodder, T. A.
 15689 „ Hood, J. S.
 15694 „ Harris, C. J.
 15705 „ Hayes, G. S.
 15724 „ Harrison, C. G.
 15771 „ Hart, A. J.
 15774 „ Hallett, G. H.
 15787 Serjeant Hoare, S. A.
 15795 Trooper Harvey, C. A.
 16001 „ Harvey, D. E.
 16013 Corporal Hazel, H. A.
 16034 Trooper Hayton, A. E.
 16028 Squadron Qr.-Master-Serjeant Hockin, G. E.
 16047 Trooper Hickson, G. S.
 16049 „ Herring, J. D.
 16053 Bugler Hogarth, W. J.
 16055 Trooper Hodges, F. J.
 16057 „ Hills, A.
 16068 „ Holt, H. O.
 16070 „ Haynes, S. J.
 16094 Squadron Qr.-Master-Serjeant Harris, S. A.
 16099 Trooper Hooper, C. F.
 16117 „ Heath, T.

- 16121 Trooper Hodges, G.
- 15775 Squadron-Serjeant-Major Irving, A. J.
- 16071 Lance-Serjeant Inglis, J. R.
- 16118 Trooper Issott, R.
- 14503 „ Jennings, G.
- 14535 „ Johnstone, W.
- 14537 Corporal Jude, H.
- 14560 Lance-Corporal Jeffreys, E. G. (wounded).
- 14613 Trooper Jarrett, G.
- 14656 „ Joel, H. G.
- 15619 R. Quarter-Master-Sergeant James, H.
- 15731 Trooper Jackson, T. S.
- 15739 „ Jones, W. H.
- 15748 „ Jeffries, A.
- 15779 „ Johnson, F.
- 16003 „ Jameson, F.
- 16031 „ Jackson, H. D.
- 16063 „ Jolin, H.
- 15606 „ Ketskemety, G.
- 15609 „ Kent, J. D.
- 15631 Corporal Kemble, H.
- 15646 Trooper King, P.
- 15696 Serjeant Kentish, G.
- 15701 Trooper Kingham, P.
- 16072 „ Keech, T. I.
- 16084 „ Kingston, T.
- 14501 „ Lyon, G. W.
- 14506 Staff-Serjeant-Major Loveland, W. F. (wounded).
- 14543 Trooper Loveland, J.
- 14618 „ Lachner, W. O.
- 14637 „ Lawrence, E. H. T.
- 15645 „ Lovell, F. J.
- 15654 „ Loggin, E.
- 15662 „ Lancaster, F.
- 15664 „ Lashmar, A. G.
- 15681 „ Levell, E. L.
- 15184 Lance-Corporal Lawton, F. W.
- 15099 Trooper Linton, R. J.
- 15715 „ Lasseter, L. B.
- 15725 „ Lutwyche, H.
- 15726 „ Lambert, A. D.
- 15747 „ Larner, E. J.
- 15780 „ Levett, C. W.

- 16061 Trooper Lloyd, F.
 16079 Serjeant Lindsay, J.
 16093 Trooper Locton, J. D.
 16108 ,, Llewellyn, S. H.
 14510 ,, Major, H.
 14520 ,, Manning, W.
 14528 ,, Mucklowe, F. W.
 14530 ,, Morland, J.
 14540 Lance-Corporal Mountain, F. G. (died disease).
 14551 Trooper Moberley, H. C.
 14572 Lance-Corporal McLaren, J. H. (died disease).
 14573 Trooper Mitchell, J. D.
 14577 ,, Moreton, H. H. (died disease).
 14596 ,, Main, A.
 14616 ,, Mapp, F. (wounded).
 14631 ,, Moss, W. F.
 14538 ,, Martin, W. J.
 14641 ,, Moriarty, F. M. (wounded).
 14657 ,, Miles, R.
 14668 ,, Martinson, S. B.
 15601 ,, Milne, W. J.
 15610 ,, Milton, J.
 15640 Bugler Manders, H. C.
 15690 Trooper McBarrow, W.
 15697 ,, Morrow, A. J.
 15609 Corporal Mornemant, M.
 15735 Trooper Murphy, M. C.
 15751 ,, Musson, H.
 15761 ,, Minto, A. L.
 15772 ,, Moncaster, T. J.
 16023 ,, Mileson, P. E.
 16024 ,, Moncaster, R.
 16064 ,, Moses, W. J.
 16077 ,, Morgan, E. J. (wounded).
 16092 ,, Mace, J.
 16105 ,, Morgan, E. C.
 15652 ,, Newitt, C. E.
 15679 ,, Norman, A.
 ,, Moger, F. W. (died disease).
 15792 Serjeant Noble, W. (wounded).
 16040 Trooper Nye, V. A.
 16058 Lance-Corporal Nash, G. D.
 15797 Trooper Obee, G. M.

16008 Corporal Osmond, H. D.
 14507 Trooper Parsons, H. T.
 14515 " Plant, E.
 14531 Lance-Corporal Perry, H. G.
 14559 Trooper Prise, D.
 14570 " Powers, S. F.
 14576 " Parrott, A. R.
 14583 " Perrin, J.
 14592 Serjeant Payne, W.
 14596 Trooper Pope, T. T.
 14625 " Prosch, P.
 14626 " Prosser, W. C. H.
 14640 " Perry, F. D.
 14658 " Phillips, F. D.
 15595 " Pearce, T.
 15638 " Patterson, H.
 15663 Squadron Qr.-Master-Serjeant Patchell, H.
 15670 Trooper Payne, H. J.
 15717 " Packer, H. H.
 15745 " Porritt, J. C.
 15749 " Parry, A. R.
 15790 " Peak, H. W.
 15791 " Paterson, D. (killed in action).
 16003 " Pasmore, C. (wounded).
 16010 " Perry, J. A.
 16011 " Pottier, H.
 16018 " Proudlock, J. T.
 16041 " Prior, E. E.
 16065 " Pullen, H.
 14509 " Rex, C. H. (died of wounds).
 14523 " Raynor, G. A. (killed in action).
 14561 Farrier-Serjeant Ryan, J. F.
 14586 Trooper Ross, W. T.
 14655 " Ray, S.
 15658 Lance-Corporal Rutter, W. A. T.
 15641 Corporal Reynolds, V. L.
 15653 " Rowan, L.
 15655 Serjeant Richards, R. S.
 15685 Trooper Roe, H. J.
 15730 " Robertson, J. A. S.
 15752 " Robins, E.
 15754 " Randall, W. E.
 15999 " Rowland, J. H.

- 16056 Trooper Ryder, C. E. H. (killed in action).⁶
 16062 Serjeant Rees, J. I.
 16091 ,, Rawlinson, J. J.
 14514 Corporal Scaddon, C. M.
 14518 Squadron-Serjeant-Major Smith, F.
 14519 Trooper Shreeve, J.
 14547 ,, Shaw, J. K.
 14549 Corporal Sheppard, W. A. B.
 14556 Lance-Corporal Saker, R.
 14578 Serjeant Stephens, F. W.
 14594 ,, Saunders, F.
 14602 Corporal Scott, F.
 14632 Trooper Simpson, R. E.
 14643 Lance-Corporal Smith, M. N.
 15620 Trooper Sinclair, N.
 15632 ,, Samms, J. G. E.
 15633 ,, Salvage, C.
 15657 ,, Squibb, F.
 15671 ,, Seimund, G. C. H.
 15695 ,, Stephenson, W. (died disease).
 15713 ,, Snelling, A. R.
 15722 ,, Smith, W.
 15740 ,, Stubbs, E. W.
 15746 ,, Smith, J.
 15754 Lance-Corporal Styles, F. C.
 15758 Trooper Stone, C. B. (died disease).
 15768 ,, Sweeney, D.
 15777 ,, Sloane, G. R.
 15793 ,, Smith, H.
 16021 ,, Stenhouse, J. H.
 16035 Lance-Corporal Sinclair, W. J.
 16036 Trooper Stevenson, B.
 16045 ,, Sutherland, A.
 16074 ,, Spink, J. W.
 16075 Lance-Corporal Sprunt, C. J. (wounded).
 16081 Trooper Sandwell, P. E.
 16103 ,, Smith, G. R.
 16127 ,, Slatcher, D.
 16136 ,, Smith, J.
 14511 Lance-Serjeant Thom, J.
 14529 Trooper Thomas, H. B.
 15605 ,, Taylor, W.

14617 Squadron-Serjeant-Major Trimmer, J.
 14629 Trooper Townsend, E. H.
 15605 " Taylor, R. H.
 15643 " Toomey, F.
 15676 " Titmus, C.
 15692 " Tombleson, W. J. H.
 15700 Bugler Thomas, F.
 15728 Trooper Turner, A. P.
 15733 Corporal Thomas, T. C.
 15755 Trooper Tustin, P. B.
 16016 " Thompson, W. W.
 16033 Corporal Taylor, A. G.
 16078 Trooper Town, H. M.
 16089 Lance-Serjeant Taylor, S. W.
 16139 Trooper Trinder, T.
 14566 " Ubsdell, F. W. (died disease).
 15716 " Ubsdell, A. J.
 16069 " Urmston, F. W. (died disease).
 15736 " Vallance, W.
 16026 Corporal Vickery, P. G. (died disease).
 16086 Trooper Veness, T. E.
 14512 Serjeant Wickham, E. D. P. (wounded). (Afterwards killed
 while serving with
 the sand Batt. 1. Y.)
 14517 " Wright, H. D.
 14521 Trooper Winton, A. E.
 14522 " Wright, A. E. (killed in action).
 14527 " West, S. G. R.
 14563 " Woolf, H. L.
 14575 " West, W.
 14579 " Walker, J. A.
 14597 Bugler Williams, D. N.
 14599 Trooper Weinel, C. F.
 14603 " Weldin, J. A.
 14604 " Warren, P. E.
 14615 " Wroughton, R.
 14622 " White, A. H.
 14634 " Wishart, J.
 15596 " Woodcock, H. D.
 15607 Corporal Wade, C.
 15615 Serjeant Woodmass, H. T.
 15634 Trooper Way, F.
 15649 " White, A.
 15660 " Wyrall, R. E.
 15661 " Wand, F. R.

15669	Corporal Wells, E. S. (wounded).
15673	Trooper Wright, J. T.
15704	„ Webb, H. A.
15708	„ Wilson, W.
15712	„ Wills, S. C.
15727	„ Whelpton, H.
15743	„ Wright, A. J.
15759	„ Walton, F. B.
15762	„ Ware, A. R.
15773	„ Woodd, W. K.
15781	„ Williams, J.
15782	„ White, C.
16028	„ Wright, F. W.
16032	„ Wighton, N. J. (wounded).
16043	„ Waltho, A.
16067	„ Wilson, F. R.
16082	„ Whatley, W. C.
16104	„ Worley, W.
16120	„ Whittaker, G.
16123	„ White, J. W.
16129	„ Wilmott, J. (died disease).
16135	„ Watkins, J.

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	KILLED.	DIED OF DISEASE.	WOUNDED.
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